

**ADVERTIMENT.** La consulta d'aquesta tesi queda condicionada a l'acceptació de les següents condicions d'ús: La difusió d'aquesta tesi per mitjà del servei TDX ([www.tesisenxarxa.net](http://www.tesisenxarxa.net)) ha estat autoritzada pels titulars dels drets de propietat intel·lectual únicament per a usos privats emmarcats en activitats d'investigació i docència. No s'autoritza la seva reproducció amb finalitats de lucre ni la seva difusió i posada a disposició des d'un lloc aliè al servei TDX. No s'autoritza la presentació del seu contingut en una finestra o marc aliè a TDX (framing). Aquesta reserva de drets afecta tant al resum de presentació de la tesi com als seus continguts. En la utilització o cita de parts de la tesi és obligat indicar el nom de la persona autora.

**ADVERTENCIA.** La consulta de esta tesis queda condicionada a la aceptación de las siguientes condiciones de uso: La difusión de esta tesis por medio del servicio TDR ([www.tesisenred.net](http://www.tesisenred.net)) ha sido autorizada por los titulares de los derechos de propiedad intelectual únicamente para usos privados enmarcados en actividades de investigación y docencia. No se autoriza su reproducción con finalidades de lucro ni su difusión y puesta a disposición desde un sitio ajeno al servicio TDR. No se autoriza la presentación de su contenido en una ventana o marco ajeno a TDR (framing). Esta reserva de derechos afecta tanto al resumen de presentación de la tesis como a sus contenidos. En la utilización o cita de partes de la tesis es obligado indicar el nombre de la persona autora.

**WARNING.** On having consulted this thesis you're accepting the following use conditions: Spreading this thesis by the TDX ([www.tesisenxarxa.net](http://www.tesisenxarxa.net)) service has been authorized by the titular of the intellectual property rights only for private uses placed in investigation and teaching activities. Reproduction with lucrative aims is not authorized neither its spreading and availability from a site foreign to the TDX service. Introducing its content in a window or frame foreign to the TDX service is not authorized (framing). This rights affect to the presentation summary of the thesis as well as to its contents. In the using or citation of parts of the thesis it's obliged to indicate the name of the author

# Expansive architectural strategies in the Mass Society and their influence on the architectural projects



Doctorate Thesis  
Department of Architectural Projects  
Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB)  
Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) / BarcelonaTech

Author: **Nektarios Kefalogiannis**  
Director: **Prof. Eduard Bru i Bistuer**

Barcelona, October 2015

The present thesis became possible with the support of the Greek State Scholarships Foundation (IKY) and the Postgraduate Scholarship for Studying Abroad in the field of Architecture and Urban Design of the said Foundation.



## **Index:**

### **0. Summary**

*[Resumen en castellano]*

### **1. Introduction**

### **2. The Mass Society and the massive architectural community.**

**2.1.** The architectural community as a copy of the mass society.

**2.2.** How the architects compete?

**2.3.** The competition of architecture with other professional communities. The hybridization of the professional profile.

**2.4.** Specialization in architecture or generalist architect?

**2.5.** The services' strategy vs. the brand's strategy. How this dipole is applied in Architecture?

**2.5.1.** The brand's strategy and the brand's imaginary.

**2.5.2.** The services' strategy.

**2.5.3.** The services' strategy vs. the brand's strategy.

**2.5.4.** Narrative vs. Curriculum Vitae.

**2.5.5.** There is no pure brand. Strategies that compound the services and the brands.

**2.5.6.** The services' strategy and the brand's strategy in Architecture. Gensler vs. Gehry.

**2.6.** Architecture and City: Rem Koolhaas' reflections on the Mass Society.

### **In parallel: (parallel reading 1)**

**P.1.1.** The critical mass.

**P.1.2.** The Mass Society as a homogenized society where tendencies can be created.

**P.1.3.** The Mass Society as congestion. The contemporary cities.

**P.1.4.** The theoretical base of Panagiotis Kondylis. The theory of combinations.

**P.1.5.** The Mass Society as a society of spectacle and of advertisement.

### **3. The brand's strategy in architecture.**

**3.1.** The interrelations of brands with the Mass Society.

**3.2.** The Brands in architecture.

**3.3.** From the Modern to the contemporary architecture. From the architectural product (as service) to the architectural imaginary.

**3.4.** The role of the imaginary and its relationship with the brand's product.

**3.5.** The architectural strategies as combination of different architectural actions.

**3.5.1.** The ingredients. Analysis of the different architectural actions (exhibitions, publications, educational activities etc), in relationship to the architectural projects.

**3.5.2.** The mechanism of combining architectural activities and agents.

#### **In parallel: (parallel reading 2)**

**P.2.1.** Introduction to the brand theory. The book "*No-Logo*" of Naomi Klein.

**P.2.2.** The other side. The advocates of the brands.

**P.2.3.** Brands and globalized market. The logic behind the slogan: "*If you aren't everywhere, you are nowhere...*".

**P.2.4.** Diffusion theory and the contemporary role of the advertisement. A reflection on the architecture.

### **4. How does the brand strategy influence the architectural projects? Architectural imaginary and its architectural production.**

**4.1.** How does the architectural imaginary move the pencil? Design and content.

**4.2.** The architectural imaginary as the spine of the office. The continuity and the interconnections between the different projects.

**4.3.** The competition of architecture with other professional communities. The architectural brands as possible solution?

**4.4.** The architectural imaginary and its design according to the architects' design methods.

**4.4.1.** Formalist architecture and its constructed imaginary. (Miralles, Ghery, Zaha Hadid, Morphosis, the agglosaxonic architectural school).

**4.4.2.** Conceptual architecture and its constructed imaginary. (OMA/Rem Koolhaas, MVRDV, the Dutch architectural school).

**4.4.3.** A third path. The sensational architecture and its constructed imaginary. (Herzog & De Meuron, Jean Nouvel).

**4.5.** The pure brand: Jean Nouvel. A star-architect without an office.

**4.6.** Case study: Agbar Headquarters versus GasNatural Headquarters in Barcelona. The distinctive role of the architectural design.

**4.7.** The other scales 1. The competition of the cities and the role of the architectural brands through their architectural projects. Architectural brands and city-branding.

**4.7.1.** Case study: “*Brandelona*”: Barcelona as a city model.

**4.8.** The other scales 2. The regional branding.

**4.8.1.** Tourism and regional (costal) branding. Architectural design strategies serving the coastal branding.

## **5. The case studies.**

**5.1.** More intensive investigation of concrete architectural brands with explicit, complex strategy for the construction of their architectural imaginary.

**5.2.** OMA / Rem Koolhaas.

**5.2.1.** The constant search for innovation.

**5.2.2.** OMA / AMO

**5.2.3.** Texts

**5.2.3.1.** Delirious New York, “the culture of congestion” and Down Town Athletic Club.

**5.2.3.2.** SMLXL, Bigness and Generic City.

**5.2.3.3.** Content and Junkspace.

**5.2.4.** Projects.

**5.2.4.1.** Town Hall of The Hague.

**5.2.4.2.** Bibliotheque de France (Paris) / Center for Art and Media (Karlsruhe) / Sea Terminal (Zeebrugge).

**5.2.4.3.** The Seattle Public Library (Seattle) / Oporto Opera House (Oporto) / Prada Epicenters.

**5.2.5.** Koolhaas' brand content.

**5.2.6.** Koolhaas' disciples.

**5.3.** EMBT / Enric Miralles.

**5.3.1.** Miralles' influences

**5.3.2.** Operating modes and the creation of the form.

**5.3.3.** The geometry.

**5.3.4.** Projects.

**5.3.4.1.** Cemetery of Igualada.

**5.3.4.2.** Santa Caterina Market.

**5.3.4.3.** Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh.

**5.3.4.4.** Park of Diagonal Mar.

**5.3.5.** Miralles' brand content.

**5.4.** MVRDV

**5.4.1.** The conceptual character of MVRDV's architecture

**5.4.2.** Architectural research and information (data)

**5.4.3.** Projects

**5.4.4.** MVRDV's brand content.

**5.5.** Herzog & de Meuron

**5.5.1.** The role of the senses

**5.5.2.** Materials, textures and Herzog & de Meuron's architecture

**5.5.3.** Projects

**5.5.4.** Herzog & de Meuron's brand content.

**6. Epilogue / Conclusion.**

**7. Bibliography**



## 0. Summary

The present thesis couldn't have been unaffected by the recent economic crisis (Lehman Brothers falls at September 15, 2008). Even before this crisis, it was well-known that architecture was languishing in the traditional boundaries our profession has created in order to define it. Crisis (where it appeared) made the situation even worse. Not only because of the expected general economic recession, but perhaps mainly because the crisis hardly hit the most important (structural) activity of our profession; the massive construction (aiming to feed real estate).

That massive construction (which became a bubble that burst with disastrous consequences) may have created insignificant or unacquainted architecture, but gave work to the majority of our professionals. And we are a profession with a large number of members, which means that we are cumbersome, slow to change, to adapt, to maneuver. Even in the countries that didn't suffer this crisis, architecture didn't enjoy a smooth development as well. At the period we refer to (post 2008), "pressure" was multiplying on the architectural profession by other professional communities, to "gain" portions of the activities traditionally associated with the architectural profession. Either the crisis and/or the "pressure" gave the impression of an introverted, weak, defensive and contracting architectural community.

In the environment described above, the objective of this thesis was to define in a theoretical context (since a doctorate thesis is a theoretical activity), which actions the architectural profession could employ in order to shape a coherent bundle of extroverted strategies. Emphasis should be given to its extroverted character. What type of strategies should those be? Definitely not static ones, where the objective would have been to maintain the present status quo and expand towards the unknown. Moreover, those types of strategies don't belong to the modern "art of war". For sure, part of the present status quo is obsolete and for that reason unwanted. Furthermore the uncontrolled expansion (in all directions) has caused exhaustion without tangible results. On the other hand, dynamic strategies could have been more preferable. Simulating modern war strategies in the battle field, one could surrender part of the already possessed field which may now be useless, in order to allow a rearrangement of the forces and guide them to a specific direction that leads to a privilege point. This could be a dynamic expansive strategy with positive outcomes.

The first and most important action for an ambitious strategist should be to explore the "battle field". In our case, this is the Mass Society. One more time we come up with the notion of massiveness. The massiveness (big-data) characterizes our contemporary society. The way that it functions is related to the plentitude (*plethora*) of its numbers. The thesis uses as a theoretical background the work of a political scientist and social ontologist, Panagiotis Kondylis, who defines our society as a mass-democratic one, and explains with thoroughness its structure and how it functions. The Mass Society (post-bourgeois evolution of the society) is related with the hopeful message that each member can (potentially) evolve and progress without limits [contrary to its ancestor, the bourgeois society that put limits of progression, depending to the social class origins of each member].

*Aut viam inveniam aut faciam*  
(“I will either find a way, or make one”)  
Hannibal Barca, 216 BC)

Which strategies could those be? The thesis started with the opposite sequence compared to a theoretical approach. It moved from the specific towards the general. It gathered various “stories”, which explain a personal or a collective (even of a company or a corporation) attempt of self-overcoming. Have a common element. In those stories it was not the easy success but the achievement of a personal or collective overcoming: getting over the initial obstacles in order to achieve a success, where strength was in the content of their narration. Those stories, as they grew in number, started to move around a focal point, obscure at the beginning, which progressively revealed a name: “Brands”.

It didn't take long to understand that the main enemy of the thesis was the strength and the diversity of the concept: “brand”. Each one of us has an idea of what a brand is and how it influences our daily life. Most of the time, it signifies different things to each of us. And in some of the cases, this conceptualization was far away from the thesis' brand concept. [It is not a coincidence that a lot of people confuse the concept of *branding* with one of *marketing*]. In order to overcome this obstacle, the thesis decides to introduce an antithesis (a dipole). [Contradicting a notion with another, it could be easier to reveal the main essence of that notion]. The introduced dipole was: *services* vs. *brands*.

The services compete with each other in a merely quantificational manner. A service company is more successful if it's bigger, if it has more service centers, if it can serve quicker, cheaper, more effective, with better quality of services and created products. The service companies are better if they can be “more ... than” its competitors. It is easy to compare because the comparison can be measured.

The brands, by nature, can't be compared in a quantitative level. The customers acquire a brand product because they want (with its use, for example by wearing it) to acquire (to appropriate) the brand's values (and lifestyle). The customers acquire the brand's *imaginary*, the story which lies behind it.

The services can be explained properly with their *Curriculum Vitae*, with their achievements. The brands, on the contrary, need a *narration* in order to reveal their true essence. The services can't afford their failures. If they have some, they should try to hide them. The brands instead, are nourished by their failures. Their weaknesses could be transformed to their more significant strengths. [See Steve Jobs and Apple and their personal/corporate failures, how they became part of their future success]. Services are always under comparison to other services; follow existing paths and trying to improve them. The brands are mainly an invention (regarding the imaginary that they create and they project on the product); a creation that affects all the levels of its content, an autonomous existence and for that reason can't be easily compared.

The brands' content couldn't be easily explained (although there are adjectives in each case that can describe them), for that reason their customers are closer to becoming followers (or

believers) than rational evaluators. The brand's story (how it managed to reach that point) is the most significant part of its content, which can explain better and more effectively its real essence. The most common element of all brands may be that "*it/he/she did it its/his/her way*", as the expressive theorist of (personal) branding, Frank Sinatra, would have explained.

The famous phrase of Hannibal, 22 centuries ago, may be an observation of the opportunities that the landscape gives in the content of the art of war. But in the eyes of the present thesis' author; it explains the real essence of the dipole "service vs. brand" and answers which one of the two strategies should we follow. Depending on the situation, *we will either find* an (existing) way (follow the existing path: services strategy), or *we will make one* (we will invent it: brand's strategy). From this point of view, the brand's strategy seems to be the more expansive one. Because of its structure and its content, it is easy under the same brand to move from one field to another. For that reason, we see a fashion house brand expanding its activities to perfume, the Apple brand moving from computers to mobile phones, to music reproduction devices, architects from architecture to bestir themselves to objects' design...

But we must keep one last thing in mind: There is no such thing as pure strategy. This means there is no strategy based only to branding or similarly, one that is based only on the services' strategy. Actually, there is a mixture of them (using parts of their content), depending on the situation and necessities. We call brand's strategies the ones that follow to a greater extent the characteristics of a brand as explained in the paragraphs above. For that reason, it is indispensable to know both of them.

Having specified the content and the function of those strategies, the next step is to see how they can work in the field of architecture. A useful tool is the information we have gathered through the analytical process we have followed and explained some paragraphs above. An assisting method that was used, in order to check their functionality in all fields of architectural expression, was to proceed with a categorization of architecture: formalist, conceptual, sensational etc architecture. In all those different categories, the distinct form of implementation and the varied content of those strategies have been analyzed. This analysis included the content of the architectural imaginary and the architectural design methods which have been used in order to architecturally express those imaginaries.

In order to facilitate the analysis and the assessment of the architectural brands and to reach their content; a three-step method was proposed: To reveal through their narration their (aesthetic) philosophy, through their imaginary to access their motivation core and through a series of employed notions to approach the fertile and dynamic elements that define each brand. The brands, although they constantly change, keep an unaltered part that ensures their continuity. That is what characterized them and allowed us to comprehend its existence over time. Detecting and highlighting that part is crucial for understanding the brand. Above all, it is important the thesis not confine itself to the description of the architectural brands' management or to remain at the superficiality that the brands' tacticisms create. The architectural production and the creation of the architectural form are at the core of the architectural activity. So for that reason, the thesis tried to explain how the brands' strategies (in each of the categories mentioned above) had determined the specific creation of the architectural forms.

With the aim to bring together and interrelate the architectural brand's strategies and the creation of the form; the thesis felt the necessity to focus on specific case-studies. It has chosen OMA/Rem Koolhaas and MVRDV, as representatives of the conceptual architecture, Enric Miralles, as representative of the formalist one and the office of Herzog & de Meuron as representative of the sensational architecture.

The thesis investigates the Rem Koolhaas approach to architecture through his texts and his architectural projects in various periods of his active career. We have (tried to) demonstrate that his office had created a strong architectural brand (although in various cases he denies it) with critical and intellectual characteristics, giving emphasis to the public and the role of the urban and the metropolitan. He has a strategic vision and an iconic disposition. The role of the firm's structure had a specific influence on the produced form. The strong influence from the modern tradition (not so much in the formal level rather than in the conceptual one) and his disposition to be rational configured his architectural approach. The famous "programming" and his tendency to find opportunities to research whatever laid within his professional grasp. Recently through AMO this led to architectural innovation, profoundly correlated to his architectural brand. In the conceptual field, if one architectural brand is applying a coherent expansive strategy, surely this is the one of OMA/Rem Koolhaas.

On the other hand, Enric Miralles is a prominent figure of the formalist architecture. His architecture (built or just projected), rather than his ambiguous texts, is the key element to understand his architectural content and how it is applied (unequivocal) to his design. The hyper-defined geometry of his form (which permits the continuation in its evolution), the persistency in the variation as a method and the symbolic role of the elements' repetition are the main factors (as the thesis considers) for understanding his architecture and his brand's content. The calculated spontaneity of his forms and its complexity, as well as the density of spatial events (in every part of the formed space he "narrates" a situation) define the essence of his architecture.

It seems, following different paths, that both Rem Koolhaas and Enric Miralles focused, through their architecture, on a particular *cultural market* and they sought to leave their signature to the contemporary society through their own brands.

The third case study is the architectural office of MVRDV. This Dutch office made a significant impression with its first projects, exactly because those projects had an innovative character based on the use of the architectural concepts. The MVRDV architects belong to the conceptual architecture, but they use the concepts with a different way (than, for example, Koolhaas). We may say that they use the concept with a more direct approach, interrelate it strongly with the produced form. MVRDV is interested strongly in the architectural research and elaborates various forms of information (recently big-data) in order to reach some conclusions on the way that architecture should operate in various circumstances.

The fourth case study is the architectural office of Herzog & de Meuron. The thesis characterizes them as sensational architects, that means architects that pay attention at the impact that their architecture has on the human perception. In their case, the use of the material, the construction methods, as well as the characteristics of the space (eg the dimensions or the way that the light enters in the space) play an important role in the

construction of the human perception. They are very attentive on how their architecture is being perceived by the senses of the users/visitors and they elaborate various design strategies in order to augment the number of the stimuli that the users/visitors receive from their architecture.

## Resumen en castellano

La presente tesis no podía no haber sido afectada por la reciente crisis económica. Incluso antes de esta crisis, era bien sabido que la arquitectura languidecía en sus límites tradicionales e incluso en los países que no sufrieron esta crisis, la arquitectura tampoco disfrutó de un suave desarrollo. Ya sea la crisis o la "presión" por parte de otras profesiones, se dio la impresión que la comunidad de arquitectura era introvertida, débil, defensiva y en contracción.

Con este panorama, el objetivo de la tesis era definir qué acciones la profesión de arquitecto podría emplear, con el fin de dar forma a un conjunto coherente de extrovertidas estrategias. Con el objetivo de especificar estas estrategias, la tesis se desarrolla de lo específico a lo general. Se han recogido varias "historias", sobre todo fuera del campo de la arquitectura, que explican un intento personal o colectivo de auto-superación. Esas historias, a medida que crecían en número, comenzaron a moverse alrededor a un punto central que reveló progresivamente un nombre: "Marcas".

No pasó mucho tiempo para comprender que el principal enemigo de la tesis era la fuerza y la diversidad del concepto: "marca". Con el fin de superar este obstáculo, la tesis decide introducir una antítesis (un dipolo). El dipolo introducido fue: *servicios* vs. *marcas*. Los servicios compiten entre sí de una manera meramente cuantitativa. Las empresas de servicios son mejores si pueden ser "más ... que" sus competidores. Es fácil de compararlas porque la comparación se puede medir. Las marcas, por naturaleza, no se pueden comparar en un nivel cuantitativo. Los clientes adquieren un producto de la marca porque quieren adquirir los valores de la marca. Los clientes adquieren el *imaginario* de la marca, la historia que hay detrás de él.

Después de haber concretado el contenido y la función de estas estrategias, el siguiente paso fue investigar cómo ellas pueden ser implementadas en el campo de la arquitectura. Un método que se ha aplicado fue la categorización de la arquitectura: en arquitectura conceptual, formalista, sensacional etc. En todas estas diferentes categorías, han sido analizados las diversas formas de implementación y el contenido variable de estas estrategias. Este análisis incluyó el contenido del imaginario arquitectónico y los métodos del diseño arquitectónico que se han utilizado para expresar arquitectónicamente esos imaginarios.

Por encima de todo, era importante que la tesis no se quedara en la superficialidad que los tacticismos de las marcas crean. La producción arquitectónica y la creación de la forma arquitectónica están en el núcleo de la actividad de los arquitectos; por eso, la tesis trató de explicar cómo las estrategias de las marcas habían determinado la creación de las formas arquitectónicas.

Con el objetivo de juntar e interrelacionar las estrategias arquitectónicas de marca y la creación de la forma; la tesis tenía la necesidad de centrarse en casos concretos de estudios. Se ha optado por OMA/Rem Koolhaas y Enric Miralles. Hemos intentado demostrar que el despacho de Rem Koolhaas (representante de una arquitectura conceptual) había creado

una fuerte marca arquitectónica con carácter crítico e intelectual, dando énfasis al espacio público y al papel de lo urbano y lo metropolitano. Él tiene una visión estratégica y una disposición para una arquitectura icónica. Es conocido por su famosa "programación" y su tendencia en encontrar oportunidades para investigar lo que esté en su alcance profesional.

Por otra parte, Enric Miralles es una figura prominente de la arquitectura formalista. La geometría híper-definida de su forma, la persistencia en la variación como método y el papel simbólico que tiene la repetición de los elementos que utiliza, son los principales factores para la comprensión de su arquitectura y el contenido de su marca. La espontaneidad calculada de sus formas y su complejidad, así como la densidad de "eventos espaciales", definen la esencia de su arquitectura.

Parece que tanto Rem Koolhaas como Enric Miralles, siguen diferentes caminos, pero centrados en un *mercado cultural* particular, buscando dejar su huella a la sociedad contemporánea a través de sus propias marcas.

El tercer caso de estudio es el despacho arquitectónico de MVRDV. Este despacho holandesa había dejado una impresión importante con sus primeros proyectos, precisamente porque esos proyectos tenían un carácter innovador basado en el uso de los conceptos arquitectónicos. Los arquitectos MVRDV pertenecen a la arquitectura conceptual, pero utilizan los conceptos con una forma diferente (en comparación, por ejemplo, con Koolhaas). Podemos decir que utilizan el concepto con un enfoque más directo, interrelacionando directamente el concepto con la forma producida. MVRDV está interesada fuertemente en la investigación arquitectónica y elabora diversas formas de información (recientemente megadatos) con el fin de llegar a algunas conclusiones sobre la manera en que la arquitectura debe operar en diversas circunstancias.

El cuarto caso de estudio es el despacho de arquitectura de Herzog & de Meuron. Nuestra tesis los caracteriza como arquitectos sensoriales, que significa arquitectos que prestan atención en el impacto que su arquitectura tiene en la percepción humana. En su caso, el uso del material, los métodos de construcción, así como las características del espacio (por ejemplo, las dimensiones o la forma en que la luz entra en el espacio) desempeñan un papel importante en la "construcción" de la percepción humana. Son muy atentos en cómo su arquitectura está siendo percibida por los sentidos de los usuarios/visitantes y elaborar diferentes estrategias de diseño con el fin de aumentar el número de los estímulos que los usuarios/visitantes reciben de su arquitectura.





## 1. Introduction.

The Americans use a specific expression in order to explain a method to evaluate someone's carrier and the extent of his influence over his colleagues: "*He is as good as his last project*", they used to say. The accumulation of knowledge, experiences, awards or projects doesn't play any important role for that way of thinking, considering that time is not a factor and the past is just a history that doesn't influence over the current judgment. In other words, there is not any continuity, a whole project that has to be understood and evaluated, through time. Just spots that have faded, that have passed in the history, leaving just the last one remaining in the present, as a representation or a statement... That last one is what has remained from him. What we have to judge.

On the opposite site, there is a more European, we may say, position that believes that in order to understand someone or something we have to follow carefully his/its course (if he is a professional: his carrier), to follow all of his movements, to reconstruct his life with accuracy, in order to understand the inner line that connects his works or his thinking. We have to make obvious which is the force or the necessity that motivates him, makes him act in this way and not in another.

In other words, the overall approach needs to gather all the possible information, evidences, details or elements, to evaluate them and to construct an "image", as accurate as possible. And that, in order for all of us to be in the position to express an opinion, to make a judgment upon a person or an organization, taking into account his/her/its historic course. To find the real essence of his existence, giving importance to the *procedure*... Everything counts, everything is important; nothing is considered as left-over. All of them together can create the right, true "image" that should represent him/her/it. That "image" is his/her/its identity. His/Her/Its deeper essence.

### Present and past

Which of the two positions should we follow? Remain to the present or reconstruct the past, considering the present as part of the history? Judge the last action/position or evaluate the course? The present thesis doesn't want to make an evaluative judgment, considering one is right or the other is wrong. It is a matter of convictions after all, a way of understanding the world and our presence on it. It is a matter of the *κοσμοεικόνα*, that means the perception of the world that we have, according to the Greek philosopher Panagiotis Kondylis, in his book "*Power and Decision*<sup>1</sup>".

We should not judge, but we should have an opinion... The present thesis follows the second position, believing that we need to have the broader perception (in the historical framework) in order to understand correctly and fairly a person or an activity. We have to reconstruct the

---

<sup>1</sup> See: Panagiotis Kondylis, *Power and Decision*, Athens: edition Stigmi, 1998. [greek text].

right “image”, map the procedure and conceive the identity, in order to find and understand the real content that motivates and characterizes a person or an organization.

## Identity

Why should a Thesis with the very formal title *Architectural Strategies in the Mass Society* and the even messier key word of *branding* (that it is hidden behind that formal title and it is all the time present during the development of the Thesis and in each chapter of this text) introduces itself starting with a rather philosophical dilemma?

It does so exactly because it believes that all those strategies that we will try to spotlight during the present thesis starts from a basic position, a posture, or with other word, an attitude towards the world: Behind all those strategies there is the conviction that there should be an *identity* that we have to respect and highlight, should be an *essence* that we have to conserve and understand and should be a *motivation* that moves the whole structure (afterwards we will call that structure: brand) and indicates the next steps. That identity and essence (in the next chapters we will call it imaginary) gives a meaning to the content and the procedure and forces all the components of the structure (with a clear tendency to be autonomous and independent) to come together, to be part of a hierarchy and work collectively towards a given direction.

It is highly possible reading this thesis or observing those strategies in the everyday life to find them more as marketing procedures in order to survive (or to get bigger) professionally or selling techniques in order to make the company a more profitable organization, than as a conviction or a way of life. It is true, in everyday life those strategies have the aim to position the person/company/organization in the professional field and make him/it more competitive (in other words more attractive).

But the thesis strongly believes that in the core of those strategies (and of the persons<sup>2</sup> that design them) exists the conviction that there is a meaning behind them, there is an essence that gave birth to them and plots their trajectory and finally, there is a vital content that obligates them to do this action instead of that one, to follow this procedure instead of the other. The author of this thesis invites the readers to have the above in mind while reading the following chapters. Otherwise, if the text will be conceived as a manual for choosing the appropriate techniques and marketing strategies, will not have any reason to be a Doctorate Thesis, which has the obligation to see the things from a certain distance and evaluate the intentions, the actions and the final effects.

---

<sup>2</sup> A lot of people surely will read the brand's strategy of Apple as a successful one and will try to analyze its structure, its content and its tactics. But surely all of them will agree that Steve Jobs, at the moments of designing-redesigning it, in his mind he didn't have just strategic and tactic possible future movements. In his mind should have had prior to all of them the real essence of his creation, the hopes and the dreams that he had invested on it, the meaning that it has from the beginning. This essence of the brand, which has to do with its content, is the focus of the thesis and not the technical-tactical part of the branding procedure.



## From the *Agora* to the *Market*

Aim of the present Thesis is the investigation of the actions of the contemporary architects in the current mass society and how those are influencing the architectural projects, which means the way that the current architecture is being designed. We can speak about architectural strategies exactly because the architects are using a set of actions and activities in order to develop their architectural profile. The present thesis does not investigate the architecture strategies in abstract (outside of the current social, political and cultural frame of our society) but indeed wants to find out the influence of the society on the architectural production. The current society, well-known as mass society, is having a determined relationship with architecture and the way the last is been designed and constructed.

It is obvious that we are obliged to introduce another messy word: the *Market*. The world of commercial activity where goods and services are bought and sold... I wish I could write that part of the text in Greek... The word 'Market', in Greek 'Agora', has at least some crumbs of positive connotations, since it refers to that ancient space where, besides the exchange of products, they had exchange of ideas, opinions, aesthetical and intellectual positions. The contemporary Market is associated almost completely with the notion of profit. In the current situation of a severe crisis, there is a strong rejection of that notion, considering it the main responsible of the actual situation. And obviously, it is not a groundless opinion.

But in order to understand better the theme of the thesis we have to accept the actual condition (although we may want to see it getting changed) and to explain the transformation that it has from the ancient Athens up to the current Mass Society. Hannah Arendt may help us on that, the significant historian and political philosopher, who through her book "*The Human Condition*"<sup>3</sup> has perfectly and thoroughly explained how from the political Agora for the search of the commons we have shifted gradually to the exclusively economic content of the Market for the search of the profit. Basically the reason, as she explains, was the shift from the political citizen of the Ancient Greece to the individualized voter, concerned more for his private affairs, who has delegate (through the voting procedure) the responsibilities of the decisions to the politicians.

Unfortunately in this content we have to work in this thesis. If we decide to proceed on the theme, closing the eyes to the reality, we will describe an unsubstantial situation, far away from the real conditions. One point needs to be mentioned: As even Naomi Klein accepts (in his book "*No-Logo*"<sup>4</sup>), the Market is not a homogenized condition. There is a variety of differences according to the different principles that regulate each part. In the specific field of the Market where the brands are competing each other, there is the trading responsibility that are obliged to have (in order not to lose their good reputation) that makes the situation a little more bearable, comparing to other fields of the Market.

---

<sup>3</sup> See: Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.

<sup>4</sup> See: Naomi Klein, *No Logo: El poder de las marcas*, Barcelona: Ediciones Paidós Iberica SA, 2001.

## Architectural brand's strategies

Having said the above, we must acknowledge that contemporary architecture has an adjacent relationship with the Market, that is the economical background of the Mass Society<sup>5</sup>. In this process of massification, a lot of things have changed in the economy of the society and in the projection of the architectural image and its architects towards the society. In a society that the active market have created specific brands (as a way to incorporate an imaginary, an added value to the created and sold production), architecture is not remaining indifferent to the concept of architectural offices that are acting as brands.

Lots of architectural offices (independently of their size or magnitude<sup>6</sup>) are incorporating strategies of the market in the construction of their profile and in their interior organization. Those strategies, transformed into architectural strategies, do influence the architectural projects and dictate parallel actions that the architects are called to take, in the broader architectural environment.

I am referring to the architectural publications, the exhibitions, the architectural education programs, lectures etc. Those architectural activities up to some years ago were considered secondary activities and with small relationship to the main architectural work, which was the architectural design. The latest years, the perception of the architectural community has changed drastically. The architectural offices are acting as architectural brands and incorporate different methods and different tools in order to construct their architectural image, their *architectural imaginary*<sup>7</sup> (in order to use a term from the brand's theory). Some of them are the above mentioned architectural activities.

We must admit in this point that the architectural offices which use those brand's strategies have not reached the high level of efficiency that we meet in the strategies of the well-known brands. In reality, speaking about architectural brands we are using an analogy from the world of the Market, in order to explain some decisions in the architectural offices. It is certain that the architectural brands are using brand's strategies but not in a professional and extensive way.

---

<sup>5</sup> The thesis uses the approach of Panagiotis Kondylis related to the Mass Society: Panagiotis Kondylis, *The decadence of the Bourgeois Culture, from the Modern to the Postmodern Society and from the Liberalism to the Mass Democracy*, Athens: edition Themelio, 2000. [greek text].

<sup>6</sup> There is the opinion that in architecture the brand strategies are been used from the big architectural offices that actually are not the classic firm with 5-10 architects, but more like a large company, a corporation that has to act as an organization of its size. According to that opinion, those offices are using techniques or market procedures that have to do with the big companies and cannot be applied to the normal architectural office. The thesis strongly believes that this opinion is not true. The brand's strategies have nothing to do with the size and can be applied to all sizes of professional organizations. Just to remind that the biggest and more influential brands have acted as brands from the beginning, that means from their initial small size and have expanded exactly because they had as a vehicle the brand's strategy that they had chosen to follow.

<sup>7</sup> As we will see, the imaginary plays an important role in this thesis. It is the core, the essence of the brand's strategies, since it describes the content of the brand. In the same way, the architectural imaginary (of an architectural brand) is the driving force for the design of the architectural projects; it is the one, which, as the DNA, carries in it the main characteristics of the architectural office that has the aforementioned brand's strategy. In other words, the architectural imaginary is the key which can explain the content of the produced architecture and that contains the qualities of the applied architecture.

The thesis may dare to express the opinion that this semi-implementation of the brand's strategies may be profitable for the architectural offices, since that gives space to architectural spontaneous reactions, to the architectural improvisation, to the architectural craft approach, something important for the character of the architect (as he has been trained in such way) and, more than that, for the architectural procedure (that means the creative procedure, which needs to incorporate the irrational and the unexplained). So, there is not the obsession with following a brand manual, using the most sophisticated techniques. Instead, remaining at the essence of the brand's strategy, each implementation to architecture has created a hybrid strategy. Aim of the thesis is to investigate this hybrid architectural brand's strategy.

### **From the classical exercise of the profession to the contemporary expansive strategies**

Before moving forward it is important firstly to contemplate the current situation in our profession in relation to the changes that have taken place the last three decades. In the Spanish language there is an expressive word, "*oficio*", which is difficult to translate in English with one word. "*Oficio*" describes the way that the architects (not only in Spain) were thinking and acting. It explains a profession where the moral dimension was important and the feeling of responsibility and commitment towards the colleagues and the scientific community was high. The design procedures were more hand-crafted and based on rules learned from the Architectural School (where they had studied and feel that belong) or from some admired colleagues who have been already accepted from the professional community as pioneers.

It is obvious that in the above mentioned professional situation, the architect had the feeling that belongs more to a professional union (and was responsible towards it) than that he can free himself from the professional protocol, from the responsibility to follow the others steps, and use other procedures, copied from other professional fields, far away from the already known and accepted ones.

The last decades the architects have faced a lot of changes, but according to my point of view, one of the most important was the shift at the way that the architects have to perceive their role and their position in the (professional) community. The feeling of belonging to a community had faded out and progressively the architects have started to look around (and some imitate) how the other professionals were acting. Some of them had moved forward one more step, being interested in the strategies of working and selling of other fields of the Market, away from the ones of the liberal professions. I refer to the commercialization's strategies of companies that sell commercial products, like apparel or products of domestic use. The excellent Thesis<sup>8</sup> of Eduard Sancho Pou, in our University, with title: "*Estrategias de Comercialización en la Arquitectura*" had very well explained how some architects have been influenced by other professions' commercial strategies and have started a pioneer carrier, influencing on other colleagues.

---

<sup>8</sup> See: Eduard Sancho Pou, "*Estrategias de Comercialización en la Arquitectura*", PhD Thesis, ETSAB, 2010. That thesis has been published in a book: Eduard Sancho Pou, *Architectural strategies: marketing, icon, politics, masses, developer, no1*, Barcelona: Peninsula, 2012.

We have described above the situation (which has started to change) some decades ago. It will be useful to see how that situation has been affected recently. On the one hand, a massive access to the architectural studies has multiplied the professionals who try to position themselves in architecture and had transformed it into a mass profession. On the other hand, the recent crisis has severely hit architecture (maybe harder than any other) exactly because the construction's field has been at the epicenter, making obvious that our profession, as it is up to now, can't be sustainable for the near, foreseeable future.

Way out from this difficult situation can't only be the decision to change professional activity, as unfortunately a lot of our colleagues (the younger in age) have been forced to do so. The target should be to find the adequate architectural strategies that will permit a greater number of qualified architects to use the tools they have acquired by their architectural education in order to reposition themselves in the new professional panorama.

Those strategies should have expansive character, which means to permit the architects to use their professional capacities outside the professional field where they used to operate and which seems that it is already saturated. Those expansive strategies are extremely important to be investigated since they can give an optimistic perspective and escape route to our profession. Those strategies may vary and all of them are welcomed because they can offer alternatives to the present ominous environment. The present thesis will try to present some of them, related to the brand's theory.

In the past, some architects were always open to other ways of thinking. The important is that in our current period, this attitude (to be open to other approaches, that don't traditionally belong to our profession) has started to characterize an important part of the architects, to the extent that the professional panorama changed significantly. A lot of architects have started to believe that the exit from the professional *cul-de-sac* (already present some years ago, now had been intensified more dramatically) will not come using our traditional professional approaches, but more if we try to incorporate to our way of working other professionals' strategies. The architect, in a way, as the thesis understands him, searches every time less and less, with introversion, for solutions that come from his profession, and more frequently accepts, with interest and extroversion, the solutions (or the methods/strategies/techniques) that have been applied successfully in other fields.

### **Architectural strategies and their influence on the architectural quality**

A straight-forward question: Is this new reality capable to improve the architecture that is being produced? Do we produce better architecture than in the past? The answer is difficult. But surely the results are outcome of the architect's design capacities. One thing is the procedures and the strategies used to reach the result and another thing is the design capacities that will affect the aesthetic and functional final result. We must not lose from our perspective the fact that in architecture the final production is always the designed space with its physical substance, which means the architectural form. The final result is the architectural project and the spatial qualities (in aesthetic and functional level) that they propose.

The thesis wants to have this factor of the architectural quality throughout its development and to try not to fall in the trap to evaluate the various architectural strategies in a superficial level. We cannot be interested in managerial approaches, where the procedure is more important than the final production. Since the qualities of architecture exist at its creative phase and the architectural efficiency can be shown through the skillful use of the architectural design tools; the final architectural production (the architectural project) is the result through which we should evaluate the architectural strategies.

All these drastic changes in the architectural community and in the way that we conceive the professional framework in which we operate, must obligate the architectural research to investigate the transformations that those changes imply at the level of projecting and designing architecture. This investigation should be conducted with a critical view but also with receptive disposition, in the light of the used methods and the employed architectural means. It is important that the architectural research can get involved in the investigation of those architectural activities, since, up to now, the common attitude was to consider those activities as ad hoc situations, in the periphery of the architecture, adequate to be investigated by “commercial” architects.

The common academic opinion was that those activities do not have any theoretical importance, do not have any intellectual value, cannot conduct to architecture with qualities and, in any case, cannot offer anything useful to the academic community. That position from the academic community let the specific research area (at a great extent) uninvestigated, an unmapped panorama, which, according to the thesis' point of view, can give us important information, especially if we see it as the result of the interaction between rational human being in an open society. The above mentioned attitude of the academic community towards this research area can be justified by the fact that in many attempts the researchers were more interested in presenting the results of that architectural approach in a more managerial level, interested in the procedures and not in the architectural results.

The present thesis has the intention to investigate those architectural strategies (brand's strategies in architecture) in the base of the produced architectural results and to show that those strategies can conduct to projects with architectural qualities and can influence on the quality of those projects. The decision to present some architects and their work (that are acclaimed academically for their qualitative architecture), who the thesis considers that follow architectural strategies similar with the ones that it wants to investigate, has the aim to show that these types of strategies can also have as a result architectural projects with qualities, besides the commercial success.

The investigation of the present architectural strategies, for creating a brand and projecting architecture through it, the thesis believes that will help to explore the new opportunities that exist for the architects in this new social and economical environment and to appraise the expansive character of the present architecture. But above all, to research and record the influences (the changes, the improvements, the transformations) that this new way of doing architecture is having on the architectural projects, the hardcore of the architectural activity.





## 2. The Mass Society and the massive architectural community.

The understanding of the structure of the current society is important in order to conceive the way that the architectural community develops its profession. And that because the influences that each society has on its production (besides others, its architecture) are directly connected with the content that it has and with the way that it functions. The development of the social infrastructures and the massification that the society experiences in the last decades lead to theories that explain our society as a massive one. This conception of the society as a mass society is crucial in order to perceive the position and the role of architecture in the new social system.

The Mass Society<sup>9</sup> is the descendant of the previous form of social organization in the western world, well-known as Bourgeois Society. The fully predetermined social structure with a rigid hierarchy, characteristic of the Bourgeois Society had given his place to the flexible and mutable structure of the Mass Society. The necessity to go back to the structural organization of the two historic societies (Bourgeois Society and Mass Society) is justified in order to understand how each society functions and, as a consequence, how the production of that society is formed.

A lot of theorists of the Mass Society (as Panagiotis Kondylis, a philosopher and social ontologist who has researched deeply the actual society, to whom we are going to refer later) have explained that the cultural and economical productions of each society (between them, the architecture) have direct connection to and are depended fully by the predominant social structure. According to this theoretical approach, we cannot research, in abstract, one expression of the current society (for example, the architecture) without understanding the way that the whole society works and the structure with which that society is organized. This structure is a pattern that can be found in each of the parts that support that society and specify the process of its development.

This second chapter is organized in two parts. The first contains the main necessary information for the Mass Society and the massive character of the architectural community. The second part (named *parallel reading*) refers to texts that intend to focus on different arguments mentioned in the first part, where we didn't have the space to comment extensively without losing its internal continuity. Those texts in the second part are very important for the understanding of the whole thesis but are working structurally as annexes to the main subchapters.

### 2.1. The architectural community as a copy of the mass society.

---

<sup>9</sup> The Mass Society, in capitals, since we refer to the society described by Panagiotis Kondylis, it is a theoretical construction and has specific content.

The architectural community has the massive characteristics of the Society in which it belongs, the so called Mass Society. These characteristics of the masses determine the way that our community functions and the way that it is structured. Since the architectural community is part of the Mass Society and has similar structure, we can understand how it works by analyzing and understanding the function of the Mass Society. In the chapters P.1.1. and P.1.2. we will analyze the Mass Society and the way in which it functions and is structured, and for that reason it is not necessary to repeat those conclusions in the present chapter. What it is necessary to underline, and will help us to move forward to the analysis of the following chapters, is that there is a strong relationship between the architectural community and the Mass Society and the fact that these two have similar patterns and functionality.

In this point it is useful to refer more in one quality of the architectural community, an attribute that it has inherit from the current society: the massiveness. The plenteousness of the architects and the excess of the architectural offer in the society (as it happens in the majority of the professional communities) have changed drastically the way that the architects work and search for job. The big number of architects has a strong influence on the situation of our profession in all the countries (in a greater or smaller extent). How each architect and the professional organizations are going to deal with that reality? One thing it is sure, the notion of the professional responsibility towards the society (the 'oficio' that we had commented in the first chapter) has altered. The professional structures and the functioning rules of our architectural community have been transformed according to the changes that have happened in the broader society.

In other words, our discipline doesn't work with the rules, the standards, the principles and the regulations that our profession knew up to now. It has to search for a new "road map" in order to find out his new positions in this complex social scene. With an introverted procedure, each architect and then all the architects altogether (inside their professional colleges or organizations) have to analyze the advantages and the handicaps that they carry professionally from the past, have to map the changes that the society has experiences the last years (especially in the functional level and in its structure) and have to enquire how the notion of flexibility (a maxim, as we see in the Mass Society) can be applied in their professional strategy.

What it is sure is that the necessary introverted procedure that we have referred previously, has to be completed in a concrete period of time, reaching some conclusions, since it is necessary (with those conclusions bore in mind) to act extroverted (as the title of the thesis implies), making use of the competitive tools that we do have as a discipline. In parallel with the tools that our profession and our education have given to us, we must invent new ones that can be emerged by the analysis of the current structure and the function of our society. Some tools can be found in others professional fields and some other from the organizational analysis of the market (for example, the brand strategy and how it can be used in architecture comes from that approach). Additionally, the analysis of the Mass Society itself (making use of analytical and research methods from the Sociology or the Social Ontology) may not give us directly tools for professional restructuring (as do the other professional fields or the

market) but can give us a strong knowledge of our Society, which means a credible actual “battle map” onto which to design our expansive strategy.

## 2.2. How the architects compete?

The architects compete between themselves with different forms, depending on their understanding of the profession orientation and their opinion for the role of the architect in the society. Some of them also intent to penetrate to other professional areas, offering a hybrid professional profile that contains both architectural characteristics and attributes from the other professional disciplines. That extroverted and open strategy we will analyze in more extent in the next (2.3.) chapter and for that there isn't any reason to expand the theme furthermore.

Another strategy that can be applied by specific architects (depending on their academic background and their theoretical or technical abilities) and, of course, cannot be adopted by the majority of the architects for obvious reasons, is the creation of a meta-architectural profile. The meta<sup>10</sup>-architects are those architects that create products which refer to other architects. Those products may be theoretic books or architectural editions (magazines), educational products (such as postgraduate courses or technical workshops for the learning of computer programs) or the promotion of design programs that can be bought and used by the architects for their professional activity. The number of the meta-architects cannot be substantial, since their products should be absorb by the “ordinary” architects (who are their market). Of course, this professional classification takes advantage of the massive character of the architectural community (as we have seen in the above chapter) and for that reason the last two decades have been expanded strongly. Frequently, some of them combine<sup>11</sup> their meta-architectural activity with the normal architectural labor, preserving cleverly an ambiguous position.

But the main strategies that can be used by the ordinary architects are two: the services' strategy or the brand's strategy. This dipole is crucial for the understanding and development of the present Thesis and we will refer to it in various occasions. The basic differentiation element of those strategies is the decision on which aspect of architecture are going to give the emphasis. In the services' strategy the emphasis is given to the product per se and to its

---

<sup>10</sup> The “meta” as a prefix comes from the Greek language and has the meaning of ‘after’ or ‘beyond’. It is a “*prefix used in English to indicate a concept which is an abstraction from another concept, used to complete or to add later*”. See: “Meta”, *Wikipedia* [wiki], (last modified 05 July 2015), <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meta>>accessed 08 July 2015. Normally is used for a higher level of abstraction. The term meta-theory can help us to understand its signification: “*Any subject can be said to have a meta-theory, a theoretical consideration of its properties, such as its foundations, methods, form and utility, on a higher level of abstraction*”.

<sup>11</sup> If we except the theoretical architects who produce mainly theoretical work (combined, most of the time, with teaching activities), the rest of the meta-architects combine their professional work as architects (in an office) with their meta-architectural labor (e.g. publishing books). That means, they are simultaneously architects and meta-architects. For example, the publishing effort of MVRDV or Rem Koolhaas (both of them we will see later), should be considered as a meta-architectural activity or the same should be considered the various architectural workshops (e.g. related to the implementation of the digital advances in the architectural production).

measured characteristics (should be more efficient, cheaper, with specific functional standards, with better quality that can be measured etc, in order to be competitive in the market and to be preferred by the users). Especially in architecture, this strategy has a lot to do with the design and construction standards and the efficiency of the office to construct economically and on time. In the brand's strategy the emphasis is given to the context. The interest doesn't lay on the product itself but more in the conceptual framework which is associated with the product. In the architectural field, the brand's strategy has to do with the control of the continuity of the architectural production in the office<sup>12</sup>, as well as, with the "added value" that the design methods can give to the project. Since the role of those strategies (services' strategy and brand's strategy) is very important for the present thesis, we will not expand more in this chapter. In the chapter 2.5. we will see how those two strategies are applied in the market and afterwards how those can be applied in architecture. The brief comment in the present paragraph has more the intention to mention those strategies as two possibilities in a broader toolkit of strategies that can be used by the architects.

Regardless of the strategies that an architect can follow in the actual competitive environment, it is important to formulate an idea of how this environment is; to have an image of the current situation. If we explore the social, political and cultural environment, we will be possibly capable to design the right strategy in order to operate in it. The strategy will be the result of the analyzed environment. In that direction the analysis of Manuel Gausa in his book "Open: Arquitectura y ciudad contemporánea. Teoría e Historia de un cambio"<sup>13</sup> will be helpful. He present the historic periods from where the citizen has passed, having different roles because of the different situations that socially were predominant. From the role of the classic observer he became the modern walker (the flâneur we may say) of the modern era, in order to come to the present mass society, adopting the role of the contemporary explorer. As Manuel Gausa explains in his own words: "*The classic observer and the modern walker have given way to the contemporary explorer: a 'telefocal' and 'multifocal' explorer attentive (given his inclusion in a new system of difference) at diverse and various levels – layers and nets – of a reality made (simultaneously) by multiple, interlaced and interconnected projections*"<sup>14</sup>. According to Manuel Gausa "*the contemporary explorer – navigator, hunter and strategist at the same time – faces today a space progressively 'polyphase', because of its complex and heterogeneous manifestations*"<sup>15</sup>. As it is obvious, in the actual social and cultural environment of extreme complexity, the role of the citizen is to explore and to understand (in order afterwards to operate in it) the complex environment.

For Manuel Gausa the predominant characteristics of the social environment is its digital character, the role of the forces and movements that operate in it and the dynamic events that take place in it. The field for the exploration is "*an elastic, mutable, deformable and definitely irregular field of movements and events, which has been simultaneously produced at different*

---

<sup>12</sup> The continuity of the architectural production can be ensured, as we will see, with the creation of the imaginary. The imaginary is actually a thread that connects all the projects, make sure that they belong at the same production (giving outside that impression) and give meaning at the whole professional activity.

<sup>13</sup> See: Manuel Gausa, *Open: Arquitectura y ciudad contemporánea. Teoría e Historia de un cambio*, Barcelona: Actar editions, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 123. Text in Spanish, translated in English by the thesis' author.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

*levels, scales and times*<sup>16</sup>. For him “*the digital, informational space would be synthetic, mathematic and also modelable space: a space that would not belong at a historic conventional world (as it has been accessed up to now by our senses) but would be capable to abstract it to basic and selective information, to ‘territories of synthesis’*”<sup>17</sup>. In this virtual space the contemporary explorer<sup>18</sup> “*would be the manipulator of this new technologic instrument, a dynamic and evolutionary one*”<sup>19</sup>. The explorer (for us the architect-explorer) should be, as we have seen above, navigator, hunter and strategist, at the same time. Should be a manipulator that can take advantage of the plural, complex and multifocal society in which he has to operate. Through the lines of the Manuel Gausa’s text, we can read an exploration strategy (which is operational, at the same time) that can be proposed to the architects. Has as a prerequisite the accurate perception of the field, where he is called to operate.

### **2.3. The competition of architecture with other professional communities. The hybridization of the professional profile.**

The perception that the role of architect should be firmly restricted inside the boundaries of the “architectural activities”, as they have been defined historically, belongs to a previous era. Since those activities are “shrunk” by the invasion of other professionals (for example, the civil engineers or the environmental engineers, besides others) or by the new laws which de-regulates the architectural profession, opening those activities to other professionals, limiting ourselves to what the situation or the other professional groups have left for us is not an efficient strategy.

On the contrary, an extroverted and expanded strategy should dictate the opening of the horizon and the creative consideration of our profession as something more than the construction of buildings. In parallel with constructing buildings (which we should do as good as we can, in order not to be challenged our capacity to develop it in the future), the architects can make creative use of the knowledge acquired in the University and of our ability to process complex operations, as it is the architectural design, in order to explore new fields of professional activities.

Taking under consideration the above, another strategy for competing in the inter-professional field can be the creation of hybrid professional profiles which can contains, at the same time, some parts of the architect profile (for example, the understanding of space and the creative ability to design) and some parts of others professional profile (for example, the communicational skills of the advertisers). This combination of abilities can be created, either by the familiarization of the architect(s) at the others professional environment (by studying

---

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>18</sup> The explorer has the disposition to move away from the already known environment and to explore the unknown, obviously through an expansive strategy. The notion of the explorer is very near to the present thesis approach regarding the necessary expansive character of the architect.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

the subject or by working in it), or through the collaboration of the architect(s) with other professionals, by creating joint ventures or firms. Some example of architects that had succeeded in those in-between or hybrid professional areas (e.g. at the publishing houses, corporations, touristic activities etc) and have invented new professional activities (with strong the presence of the architectural vision) can prove us that exist unexploited professional fields to which we can expand.

In that direction interesting (for understanding the concept of hybridization) are the comments on the matter by Rita Santos-Fernandes Pinto de Freitas at her Doctorate thesis with title: "HYBRID ARCHTECTURE\_context, scale, order"<sup>20</sup>, developed and presented in ETSAB. Although the subject of her Thesis is hybrid architecture, which defines it as "*all architecture that is at once object, landscape and infrastructure is considered hybrid*"<sup>21</sup>, the approach that she has for the definition of hybrid is very helpful for our work. She defines (architectural) hybridization as "*a process that, through the act of crossbreeding (or unifying) diverse (architectural) natures or elements, makes the attainment of a new reality possible – a reality with its own identity and new (architectural) qualities that do not exist if the hybridized elements are considered individually and separately*"<sup>22</sup>. This hybridization procedure, which gives complexity and richness, doesn't add qualities at the already existing ones (the ones of architecture if we consider it the base, as happened in the transplantation), but multiplies those qualities. That happens because, through the hybridization, it is developed an interaction mechanism that strengthens the hybridized organism and improves its overall characteristics.

The hybridization as a procedure interests also Manuel Gausa at his book: "Open: Arquitectura y ciudad contemporánea. Teoría e Historia de un cambio", which is an evolution of his Doctorate Thesis presented in ETSAB. In his text we read: "*In this sense, 'graftings' 'interferences' 'catches' 'transversalities' or 'vegetative reproductions' can only show the will of revitalizing 'crossover', which has been raised on behalf of the supply of new 'transdisciplinary' information, that means by a hybridization – semantic, genetic, procedural – generated beyond their own routines (or 'inertias') of development of a possible discipline, which has been suddenly outsourced. We inscribe ourselves – as Federico Soriano would have suggested – at the international grafting. Its goal: Apply a portion of living thought in a part of a mummified or injured body, in such a manner, in order to produce an organic union. (...) The grafter has a powerful instrument: the interference. The act of put one thing into the other. It has to do with the act of introducing in a place words, forms, etc. To mix them. (...) Every element is capable of producing, at this time, a result*"<sup>23</sup>. The thesis finds interesting the approach of the hybridization concept on behalf of Manuel Gausa, since he proposes to apply it, as a concept, in our daily behavior as architects, but as citizens too. We understand his suggestion as a call to use all the possible elements that we have in our reach in order to combine them and to create a hybrid product that can have the attributes of all the

<sup>20</sup> Rita Santos-Fernandes Pinto de Freitas, "HYBRID ARCHTECTURE\_context, scale, order", PhD Thesis, ETSAB, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 35. Through her thesis we approach the work of Federico Soriano, who at his "Manifiesto Injerista" he explains us that the transplantation (a type of hybridization) is a "*mighty instrument for revitalizing or producing something new*". See: Soriano, Federico, "Artículos hiperminimos - Manifiesto injertista", *Fisuras*, no. 4 (1997), 124-127.

<sup>23</sup> M. Gausa, *Open: Arquitectura y ciudad contemporánea*, op. cit., 37.

components. Although in the aforementioned text he doesn't refer directly to architecture, the reference at the architect Frederico Soriano and the concepts that he uses, can imply that the main reference is to architecture and can be a method not only for creating hybrid architectural proposals, but for creating hybrid architectural profile too, as it is the theme of the present chapter.

Manuel Gausa explains more his position regarding the hybridization with the following reference: "The exploration in such a 'territory of simultaneities' would have required therefore a more transversal and diagonal view, a more hybrid one. (...) A polyhedral view: yet no longer unidirectional, fixed or stabilizing, but with capacity to synthesize, open to multiple stimuli at the same time, tangible and intangible, figurative and abstract, strategic and aesthetic, accurate and evolutionary. A view more sensible at the processes than at the episodes. Explorative, infiltrated, tactic, with intentions: That will be an alerted view, at the same time capable to capture and precede keys of the projected reality towards all scales and dimensions."<sup>24</sup> He speaks about "the territory of simultaneities" and the need our position to be more flexible, capable to combine and to bring together things that seems to be, in a first view, very different. An approach towards the society and the profession that will be more interested in the processes, the practicality and the complexity of the things.

#### **2.4. Specialization in architecture or generalist architect?**

The architecture until recently in its majority was generalist. That means that has not a concrete specialization and, for that reason, has an organized and structured education in order to deal with a variety of projects, regarding its theme or its scale. For being generalist, the architect enters to the profession through the procedure of working in others professional offices, in order to "learn" the design methodologies that should apply in the future in his own projects. The proper architects had defended their given education and the approach to the profession, arguing that the design procedure has a specific methodology that can be applied in various themes and various scales. So there is no need for a specialization, since the architects, given the content of the subjects in which they work, should be capable to apply their knowledge and their creative activity in different situations. One additional argument was that the profession of architect, being a creative activity, cannot be specialized, since in the creativity the working procedures are not depending on scientific facts.

The architects used to say that there are left actually two generalist professions<sup>25</sup> in our contemporary society, the one of the architect and the one of the journalist. As the journalist must have a broad approach of the Society in order to argue with a variety of arguments, in the same way the architect should have broad understanding of the space and the social condition in order to deal in different scales and with different thematic subjects. This situation

---

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>25</sup> The argument for the two generalist professions is obviously an exaggeration. In the position of the architects we have to put all the creative professions (artists, graphic designers, fashion designers, music composers etc). All those professions that have the same creative mechanisms and for their creativity should work outside of predefined frameworks.



actually can be beneficial for the architectural production. The architect can transfer knowledge, experience, even design methods from one project to another, regardless of its scale, content or purpose. This type of “*displacement*”<sup>26</sup> can be a creative method, and for that reason, should be encouraged. The argument on behalf of the architects is that the specialization will *departmentalize* the architecture and will not permit the necessary osmosis, another important factor of creativity.

As the years passed and the scientific perception of life and society had predominated to the artistic one, the specialization has started to be a demand by the society in a variety of professions. It is true that in architecture the specialization is not intense and has reached a limited number of activities (such as the bioclimatic design, the restoration of historic monuments or buildings, or the calculation of the structures), but it is a reality. We may say that in architecture the specialization is not by subject that requires a proper methodology (as the aforementioned examples in the previous parenthesis) but more by sections of the architectural work (for example, specialization in the design and the execution of façades or interior design) that can be designed by the architect of the project, but for time saving or economy, they have been delegated to other architects. There is also a categorization of architects by interests (for example: urban design, landscape design, computer aided design etc) but those cannot be characterized as specialization, given that their limits are ambiguous and basically they use the same methodology and tools with the one of the “generalist” architecture.

Generally speaking, it is true that in the past the generalist approach had dominated and in the current condition more fields of specialization have emerged; the tendency the architect to be “specialized” has intensified. Maybe this has happened since the postgraduate studies have become a necessity. The truth is that the decision which direction to follow each architect (the path of a generalist architect or the technocratic profile of the specialist) is an important one and can define the type of strategies that he will use. Because it is clear that different strategy follows the one who want to transmit to the potential client the profile of a specialist and other strategy use the one who want to show a more generalist profile. Those two different professional directions have completely different strategies. The question is how the thesis takes position in the dilemma: Specialization or generalist approach of architecture? Does it favor one of them?

---

<sup>26</sup> Juan Antonio Cortes at his text for the Rem Koolhaas at the monograph of El Croquis he refers to the displacement method. See: Juan Antonio Cortes, “Delirious and More. I. The lessons of the skyscraper” in Fernando Marquez Cecilia and Richard Levene (eds.), “AMOMA - Rem Koolhaas [I] 1996-2006”, *El Croquis* 131/132, Madrid: El Croquis Editorial (2006), 9-31. The displacement is the method that transfers qualities or characteristics from one medium to another, from one scale to another, from one function to another. For example, one displacement can be the transition from the *free plan* (of the modernism) to the *free section* of the American skyscraper (for example, the well-known Down Town Athletic Club). As a second displacement can be considered the transition from the free section of the Down Town Athletic Club to the plan of the La Villette project of Rem Koolhaas. We have a displacement from one type of representation (section) to another (plan), and from a smaller scale to a bigger. The use of the form of an abandoned project for a house in order (with small changes) to transform it into the Opera of Oporto is another displacement. The displacements, as we can see, are creative methods that can't be explained with rational procedures. Those creative methods (and more others that exist) are characteristic tools of the generalist architect.

## 2.5. The services' strategy vs. the brand's strategy. How this dipole is applied in Architecture?

In order to explain better what the brand is and how it works (in architecture and generally in the society) it is useful to find another form of positioning in the market or (in the broader sense) in the society<sup>27</sup> (for the individuals, the organizations or the corporations), and by comparing them, to explain the real essence of the brand and the mechanism that is behind its function. Methodologically, it is very useful to explain something by comparing it with something else, though it permits us to highlight part of their structure and focus on the most important components, which help us to understand it better.

In this thesis we estimate that it will be useful to compare the brand's strategy with the services' strategy. By creating a dipole (brand-services) we have two completely different forms of positioning in the market (and the society). With their comparison we can find and highlight the strong and the weak sides of each strategy. We will dedicate the first five chapters to explain what those strategies are and, by comparing them, to find their differences. In the sixth chapter we will try to see how those strategies have been applied in architecture.

### 2.5.1. The brand's strategy and the brand's imaginary.

At the branding (the positioning method of the brands), the aim of the team that is behind them (regardless if it is a small enterprise, a bigger organization or a corporation) is to sell a product or a service<sup>28</sup>, by creating an imaginary (a complex structure of ideas, beliefs and emotions) that is strictly associated with it. Although the product (with its physical presence) is what really is acquired by that transaction, the most important thing is the imaginary with which it is associated. For that reason, a special attention is paid to the creation of that imaginary (and its components), interrelated to the enterprise that creates it and its identity. The *Brand*, which is the conceptual form<sup>29</sup> of the enterprise, has as principal aim to create a coherent imaginary (an identity in other words) that can be attractive, can create a sentimental bond with the customers and can be associated with the products of the *House*. For that reason we can see a diversion of products to be part of the production of a *House*

---

<sup>27</sup> We introduce also the society as a field of brands' activity since we believe that the brand is not exclusively a matter of the market. Of course, its origin and its main area of activity is the market, but it has also entered in other fields too, as it is the politics (the political parties or the politician have a brand content and work with brand's strategies) or the society (individuals or associations, e.g. non-governmental organizations or non-profit organizations) that are active socially and follow brand's strategies. We will not refer analytically on those themes, but it is important for the thesis to make the comment that the brand is not considered solely as an economic activity.

<sup>28</sup> As we see, and will be analyzed more later, the brand's strategy can be applied both to products and services. We refer more to the products, since the brand's strategy is used more in their case and with more efficient way.

<sup>29</sup> In our everyday expression we equate the brand with the company that has created it. Something that it is not true. The company is the physical form of the enterprise, with its structure, the employees, etc. The brand is the conceptual form of the enterprise which carries the meaning, the notions, the ideas, and the imaginary that is associated with the enterprise's production.

and all of them to have the same imaginary. As *House* it can be considered the physical form of the enterprise (the company) plus its conceptual form (the brand).

In this point it will be useful to explain what we consider as brand. All of us, from our experience we have an idea of what a brand is. Given that there is a different perception of the brand by the various analysts and since the brand is the principal concept of the thesis, it is important to be more explicit in our description. The name of the brand comes from the Old Norse (ancient North Germanic language) “brandr” which means to burn, recalling the practice of the sheep’s owners to burn their mark (to brand) their livestock. The procedure of the livestock’s branding (with a hot branding iron) has as an aim to differentiate the owner’s animals from the others with a distinctive symbol. In the Latin-origin languages (e.g. “marcar” in Spanish) it has the same signification.

With the pass of the years the meaning of branding has adjusted to the new social necessities, but at its heart still conserves its primary meaning, the differentiation. With the coming of the Mass Society and concentration of the population at the big urban conglomerations and the Metropolises, in parallel with the differentiation has an additional aim, to gain the trust, the confidence of the clients<sup>30</sup>. In the big cities and the Metropolises the newcomers (who are the majority of the citizens) do not have the established relationships of trust that they had with merchants of their small villages, where everyone knew the rest. In the big cities and the Metropolises those relationships of trust do not exist and due to the big numbers of the citizens it is extremely difficult to be established. The trust that the clients had to their merchants in the previous era now is being transformed to the trust that the clients have to the product<sup>31</sup>. A new type of product, that has been industrialized, with specific standards that guarantee the quality of its content and has a name (a brand-name<sup>32</sup>) that verifies that all of its production has the same recognized quality. Initially the brand-name (and the logo) coincided with the brand. With the pass of the years and the sophistication of the branding content, it is clear that the brand is something wider<sup>33</sup>. Is the identity of the producer, the notions, the meanings, the ideas, the perceptions and more than these, the values with which it is associated.

---

<sup>30</sup> Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo offer an excellent analysis of the brand in their book “*Pro logo*”. There they explain the importance of the trust: “*A brand first of all represents a capital of trust, to compromise his name is, for the seller, the simplest way to earn this trust. It is a fundamental structure in many human transactions*”. See: Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo, *Pro Logo: Por que las marcas son buenas para Usted*, Barcelona: ediciones Belacqva, 2005, 33. [Translation from spanish into english by the thesis’ autor].

<sup>31</sup> The brand as a guarantee of a specific quality: “*What the consumer is looking behind the brand is the guarantee of a specified quality. A quality that in general has been considered as superior. This guarantee forms at the long-term the basis of the relationship between the consumer and the producer*”. *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>32</sup> The brand-name at that period was not only associated with the quality of the product but also with an attempt to personalize the producer: “*At the beginning of the history of the industrial brands, used to be the name of a person, which intended to give a sense of 'craftsmanship' to the standardized product, but also to remind, although the production was industrialized, the existence of a human know-how behind the product*”. *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>33</sup> The brand-name and the logo in relationship with the brand’s content, according to Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo: “*The name of a brand or the logo are only the visible part of a more complex reality: to ensure the mediation between the core values of a company - its identity - and the perceptions that the clients have for those values (the image that the clients have of the brand)*”, *Ibid.*, 33.

The brand is a capital of trust<sup>34</sup> and, at the same time, it contains an added value<sup>35</sup> which increases the real material value of the product. In most of the cases the added value (all those significations that the brands' carry) is much more important than the material value and for that reason, the clients purchase the product mainly for them (e.g. the perfumes). The brand's content is the base of differentiation<sup>36</sup> with the competitors (mostly in the level of values). The brand is a promise, not only that the quality will continue to be the same, but mainly that all those values with which the brand is associated will continue to be effective. The brand is a guarantee of innovation. And finally, the relationship of the brand with its clients has the sentimental and ethical value of a "contract". The two parts form a strong relationship, which, in order to be preserved, the brand should pay special attention at his evolution not to mutate the fundamental elements of its identity.

Consciously we have used the term *House* in the first paragraph, making reference to the first most strong organizations that have designed, produced and managed powerful (in terms of content and economic impact) brands: the Fashion Houses<sup>37</sup>. Although, the companies that are behind those products are nowadays strong corporations, they tend to camouflage themselves with the use of the image of a *House* and use the same methods in order to create the imaginary. We should not forget that the *House* (as a term) is strongly related to the home, the feeling of something familiar, as something that we belong, we are part of this. The contemporary brands need that feeling of sentimental association with the *home*, into which they belong, since they want their customers to adopt this sentimental association and to create a strong bond between the customers and the brands' products.

The feeling of belonging is also incorporated at another use of the term *House*, with a more political content. It is the term referring to the powerful families that consist dynasties, such as

---

<sup>34</sup> "What lies behind the concept of brand is the capital of trust accumulated over time, which should not be betrayed". *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>35</sup> For Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo the brand contains and guarantees the added value: "The brand holds the promise of a higher quality, a more attentive service; In one phrase: guarantees an added value". *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>36</sup> The authors of the "Pro logo" give emphasis at the element of differentiation: "The brand exists only to the extent that differs from its closest competitors: the differentiation is one of the foundations of its identity. The consumer chooses a brand from the specificities that it offers and, in this sense, brand's differentiation is part of the 'contract' established between the two parties". *Ibid.*, 35.

In another part of their text they add: "Their common objective [of the brands] is to introduce a differentiation in a sector, through the promotion of specific values on which their identity is based. [The brands] are a guarantee of quality, trust and innovation. The brands tend, in fact, to act as qualitative filters. Indeed, the competition and the differentiation always lead them to focus their offer on the best that they can do". *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>37</sup> It seems that as the product is less utilitarian, more it needs the brand's strategy. For example, a cloth from a fashion house or a perfume. Those products need strongly the imaginary (that a brand strategy can create for them) in order to give them more significance. We choose to buy a bottle of perfume instead of another, not because the first has a bigger capacity of perfume, measured in milliliters. We buy it because we want to associate its imaginary (its identity and whatever it means for the customers) with us. By acquiring the specific perfume actually we acquire the qualitative elements of its imaginary that we want to project on us. In other words, by using the specific perfume we want to make the others believe that we have adopted the content of the perfume's imaginary and we want to be identified as such. As we will see in the next chapter, a perfume or a cloth from a fashion house can never us a services' strategy, since they lack of characteristics that can be quantitatively compared with those of their competitors.

the House of Tudor, for example. In this case, significant is the notion of the tradition<sup>38</sup> (which in some brands plays an important role), as well as the notion of a strong will, which sometimes rises at the policies of the brands when they have to follow more aggressive strategies<sup>39</sup> in order to oppose and antagonize other brands. The term *House* (with its political connotation) also carries the notion of protection. The members of those Houses (or the *royal subjects*) consider the House as a shelter-protector, which will give them the sensation of protection.

The thesis therefore believes, to a certain extent, that the brand has the characteristics of a *House* (with all the above mention connotations: the feeling of something familiar, as something to which we belong, which is capable to protect us, something with strong will). The tradition that follows each *House* is not used always literally (some brands want to give the impression of something new, without the burden of a past), but do have an influence on the brands' content, at the notion of consistency that the brands want to have (and is in the heart of the tradition). We may say that the brands have kept the tradition of the *Houses*, by altering it, maintaining its essence: the consistency. The consistency (of the brands' content) is very important component of the brands, since it is what the consumer (and, at the same time, brands' follower) uses as a point of reference. The consistency produces loyalty. The consumer, every time that he comes back to the brand to buy a product, he searches for the brand's content that made him to choose it at first. Therefore, the brand, not only must have an added value (its content, which we have specifically defined as the brand's imaginary), but that added value must have a consistency of its content. Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo at their book "*Pro logo*", referring to the same subject, they use the term "*ethical and aesthetical 'semiotic invariables' of the brand*"<sup>40</sup>, in order to describe the need that the content of the brand should not alter.

---

<sup>38</sup> At the streets of the Spanish cities (as well as at the Greek ones) it is quite common to see, in front of shops that want to maintain a tradition and show the continuity of their quality, a written comment such as "*this house is established since 1887*". I suppose that it is common in other countries as well, where the tradition and the continuity are appreciated a lot. The present thesis believes that those *houses* (shops with tendency to compete giving emphasis to the quality) are the first brands. Are the first companies that intent to give an added value to the product that they sell.

<sup>39</sup> Characteristic is the strategy of *cannibalization* that the brand *Starbucks* was accused for, in order to compete with other brands or other companies that are active at the same sector (coffee shops) and at the same area. We find that description at the book of Naomi Klein "*No logo*". According to that strategy, the Starbucks, working with the franchise system, authorize more franchise license, at the same area, knowing that the already existing franchised shops of Starbucks there will have smaller incomes. That will happen because the old Starbucks shops will have to compete additionally with the new ones, besides the other competitors that are in the market. Although they know it, why they authorize the new franchise license? Aim is to saturate the coffee market at the area which that strategy is applied, in order the competitors to be forced to close, although their own franchised shops will face a substantial decrease of their income. The term is used, exactly because the new Starbucks shop is "eating" part of the incomes of the older Starbucks shop, located nearby. This strategy can be characterized as one of the most aggressive strategies that a brand can implement in order to oppose to its competitors. See: Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000, 135-140.

<sup>40</sup> Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo specifically write: "*From the point of view of brand's managers it is normal to understand the brand as an expression of the 'genetic program' of the company: a stable structure, rich in potentiality, which gives to the company an existence and can win the trust of the customers – but which 'generic program' at the same time imposes, some strict rules -. It is an expressive image, which can be considered a little bit loose. We prefer to speak more of ethical and aesthetical 'semiotic invariables' of the brand. The manifestations of a brand can be assimilated to*

The consumer, as we already know, by purchasing a product from a brand, is acquiring at the same time the brand's imaginary. The acquisition of the brand's imaginary is not a collateral effect, it is the principal aim. With aim to acquire the brand's imaginary we chose to buy the specific product from the specific brand. Because, through the acquisition, what happens is a *transfer of properties*. By acquiring and wearing a shirt from a specific brand, for example, we seek to appropriate its properties, to identify ourselves with them. In the case of the brands' products, their properties are all the elements of its imaginary. By wearing a brand's product we want to show to the others that we share the values, the way of living, the attitudes, etc that the brand's imaginary contains. The important at this transaction is the acquisition of the brand's imaginary. In most of the cases, the product (by itself, as an object) is a mere cause. The customer (as an individual) uses the brand's imaginary in order to express himself in sentimental, social, cultural, even political and ideological level.

In order to sum up, the brand's imaginary is an intellectual construction. It is the heart of the brand, the one that contains the brand's DNA. With other words, it is the more crucial factor which defines with accuracy the identity of the brand. The imaginary is a series of ideas, concepts, attitudes and ways of living that characterizes the brand's content. It is the reason to buy the brand's product. It is the most strong and at the same time the most sensitive element of the brand: Strong in the conceptual level, since it defines the brand's content. Sensitive, because its mutation can cause the lost of the client's loyalty. Being so important, it should be created and maintained by a team of professionals that have an intellectual capacity and are conceptually sensitive to understand what a smaller or bigger change of the imaginary may cause at the image of the brand towards its clients and the society. [*For the architectural imaginary, see chapters 4.1. and 4.2.*].

The preferred condition is the product's user to have his own positions (in social, cultural, ideological level) and to use the brand's product in order to 'express' himself. Knowing his positions/values (on the one hand) and the various values, ideas, etc that the various brands' imaginaries represent (on the other hand), he can chose the product which brand's imaginary can fit best to his positions/values. In this case, his approach is in a semiotic level. He uses the brand's content as a sign to express his own positions, values and attitudes (obviously, the ones that are near to those that brand has). But have always the individuals structured their personality so strongly in order to have a defined position and attitude towards the society? Are we living in a society with strongly defined personalities? And in those cases, which is the role of the brand in the expression (to the society) of the individual's vague identity?

Apparently, in those cases, the content of the brand (its imaginary) is used in order to fill gaps in the formation of the personality. These are the cases where the brand's product is not used as a medium of expression of the user's own predefined position, but as 'filling' of an empty (or better say: non-existent) position. The individual, instead of putting himself into a procedure (that requires a lot of effort and thought) to think and decide his positions towards open important themes of our daily life (in other words, instead of defining himself through the

---

*acts of meaning, and these invariables constitute simply a basic grammar, a form and content's sign that permits construct the brand's identity". M. Chevalier and G. Mazzalovo, Pro Logo, op. cit., 34.*

creation of a series of positions), acquires those positions together with the products that he purchases. Under this perspective, the brands are not manufacturing simply a cloth (for example) [actually the product is manufactured by a subcontractor somewhere in Asia and in Free Trade Zones<sup>41</sup>], but, together with that (and more important than that), they ‘manufacture’ the positions, the values, the attitudes and the aesthetics of the consumer.

Under a specific prism, we may support that the purchaser (as a citizen, this time) delegates to the brands the responsibility to define some of the conceptual elements which afterwards will compose part of his personality, will define some of his positions and his aesthetics, besides other things. As he did some centuries ago with the assignment of the political affairs to the politicians, as Hannah Arendt has explained<sup>42</sup>. The purchaser (consumer, user and citizen, at the same time) acquires the content and the ‘qualities’ (values) of the imaginary that is associated with the purchased brand’s product. By changing the cloths that he wears and the products that he uses, may change the signs that he emits towards the world, becoming a new *brand* person.

Some cases (consumers under the complete determination of the brands) are interesting themes for psychological analysis, although, those extreme situations, are cases that refer to a very small number of people. Under normal circumstances, the influence of the brand’s imaginary on the individual’s personality is controlled and it has more the character of a game<sup>43</sup>. It has to do with the expression of identities that doesn’t always has roots to the personality, it has a more superficial substance. Nonetheless, in the contemporary society, where the brands play an important role, we have to admit that the majority of the individuals take advantage of the existing well constructed brands’ imaginaries and they use them, in one or another way, to a greater or smaller extent, in order to express their positions/values. Anyway, we are not capable to think and form our personal opinion and position for everything, for that reason we acquire some of them from others, either by reading a book, or by acquiring a product that contains a position, attitude or aesthetic opinion. [*The insistence of the architects and the designers to purchase an Apple device, instead of another PC, might is irrelevant to what we are discussing in this chapter?*]

Closing this chapter we will like to refer to the authors and the books that have influenced on our research. The first reference will be the authors Michel Chevalier and Gerald

---

<sup>41</sup> N. Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, op. cit., 195-230. [Chapter 9: “The Discarded Factory: degraded production in the age of the superbrand”].

<sup>42</sup> See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958. At her book, Hannah Arendt has explained that the citizens had reached the maximum of their involvement at the political affairs at the Athenian Democracy (where every one of them that had the capacity to vote and decide for the affairs of the City-State, was obliged to participate at the democratic procedures). After that period and after having again the possibility to participate democratically at the commons (since many centuries the democratic procedures have deadened or have been eliminated, as the humanity has passed from the historic periods of the Middle Age and the Feudalism/Despotism), the citizens had shown small interest to get completely involved, and instead had decided to give emphasis at their personal affairs (such as the economy of the family). In order to do so, they have delegated the responsibility for the political and common affairs to the politicians. That was the start of the new democratic system, where the citizens elect their representatives and delegate their political responsibilities for a period of four or five years.

<sup>43</sup> “It has fun” the possibility to play with different identities by changing a cloth. In those cases you don’t change identity, you transmit a new identity with the cloth that you wear.

Mazzalovo<sup>44</sup>, who with their book “*Pro Logo: Brands as a factor of progress*”, have helped our research to understand better the structure and the content of the brands. A parallel reading was the book of Naomi Klein<sup>45</sup> “*No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*”, which we will analyze furthermore in the next chapters. Being the two last books complementary, their parallel reading can help the researchers of the brand’s theory to form a more objective impression of how the brands function. David Aaker<sup>46</sup> is an academic person with years of research on the brands who may be considered as a compulsory reading for every researcher who would like to investigate the world of the brands. One of his more influential books, the “*Building strong brands*”, has been used from the present thesis as a base for understanding them.

---

<sup>44</sup> See: Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo, *Pro Logo: Brands as a factor of progress*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

The book of Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo is one of the main books that have influenced the present thesis. The English version of the book is the one that we mention above. But we use the Spanish version to which we have access: Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo, *Pro Logo: Por que las marcas son buenas para Usted*, Barcelona: ediciones Belacqva, 2005. The fragments of their text that we use in this chapter are translated from their Spanish book. Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo are economists and their book started as an article in the Economist magazine (08/09/2001). It was a response to the book of Naomi Klein “No Logo”. Those first arguments have been evolved into a book. For that reason the title of their book is “Pro Logo” in order to highlight that the brands can be useful for the economy, the market and also for the society and to show their opposition to the positions and the argumentation of Naomi Klein. Although the text is a response to another author’s argumentation and normally in these cases those books are quite limited regarding their content, this book seems an exception, since it is very well written.

They make an analysis of the brand history, the content of the brand, the forms of communication that the brand uses and the brand’s identity. They analyze the brands in a local and a global lever and explain their function (and management) from the point of view of the brand, as well as the point of use of its clients. The book is very well organized in chapters and facilitates a series of information and examples that help us to understand the structure, the function and the aims of the contemporary brands. The overall book has as an aim to explain their point of view (that the brands can be factors of progress). Interesting also is the fact that they give importance to the semiotics in the management of the brand’s identity. In this way, the book does not limit itself at the apposition and the comparison of case-studies (as normally this type of empirical books do), but it gives a theoretical perspective that can be used in a more academic level.

<sup>45</sup> See: Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000.

Naomi Klein, above all, she is an activist and as such she writes his books. Her first book (which introduced her in the global leftist activism’s movement and had great success) was “*No Logo*”. In that book she acts as a critical observer and analyst of the brand’s theory. In her second book, also welcomed by the global activism’s community and with influence on the broader intellectual community, with the title: “*Shock Doctrine*” [Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine. The rise of disaster capitalism*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2008] she deals with a completely different subject, how the strategy of shock can impose, in various levels, the will of those that have the power to employ such strategy.

Coming back to her first book, that interests our research, although it isn’t a classical book that aims to analyze the brands, we can draw some useful conclusions from the paradigms that she has and the arguments that she uses. In some of the cases on which she focuses, she explains the brand’s strategies that the corporations follow, being in some cases very revealing. We think that a comparative reading of Naomi Klein’s “*No Logo*” together with the “*Pro Logo*” book of Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo (although they have completely different book’s structure) will help every researcher of the brand’s theory to form an objective impression of what are the brands, which are their aims and how they function.

<sup>46</sup> See: David A. Aaker, *Building strong brands*, New York: The Free Press, 1996.

In his book the author explains how the brand’s identity can be constructed, especially in the contemporary period when the advanced competition between the brands has created a strongly fragmented and competitive market. Besides of the construction of the brand’s identity, he refers analytically to the creation of the brand’s personality and the management of the brand’s system. Particular emphasis Aaker gives to the presentation of various case studies from the world of the brands, aiming to draw conclusions from their experience. It is a book for the professionals of the branding but the way that it has been written can be useful for all of us who are not professional of that field but we investigate that area for academic reasons. David Aaker is Professor Emeritus of Marketing Strategy at the Haas School of Business, the University of California at Berkley.



Matt Haig<sup>47</sup> is a journalist and novelist, whose way of writing can charm his readers. He had written two books that can be considered as twins, since they analyze the brands from two different points of view. “*Brand Royalty*” and “*Brand Failures*” describe the success stories and the failures, respectively, of 200 brands. Bruno Remaury<sup>48</sup> with his book “*Marcas y relatos*” focuses his research on the cultural content of the brands and the role of the brand in the contemporary culture. Finally, Melissa Devis<sup>49</sup> with her book “*More than a name*” researches the depth of the brands (in terms of content and identity) helping us to move away from superficial approaches which conceive the brands as simply a name or a logo.

### 2.5.2. The services’ strategy.

In the second case, the services’ strategy (the other positioning method), the aim of the team that is behind it (regardless if it is a small enterprise, a bigger organization or a corporation) is to sell a product or a service, by creating a competitive advantage<sup>50</sup>. The commercial object (product or service), in this case, is attractive because it is competitive in one or more categories. For example, it is cheaper, it has a longer coverage of service in case of failure,

---

<sup>47</sup> See: Matt Haig, *Brand Royalty: How the World's Top 100 Brands Thrive and Survive*, London: Kogan Pages, 2006.

And: Matt Haig, *Brand failures*, London: Kogan Pages, 2003.

Matt Haig with his twins’ books (“*Brand Royalty*” and “*Brand Failures*”) explains the history (the success or the failure, respectively) of a number of brands that he analyzes briefly. His books do not have a strong theoretical background and do not have the intention to analyze theoretically the brands and their function. His intention is to analyze briefly the trajectory of various brands and to draw some conclusions on what has contributed to their success or their failure. In his book “*Brand Royalty*” he presents 100 case studies with a successful trajectory and in his book “*Brand Failures*” he presents respectively 100 case studies of brands that had some failures at their intention to approximate their clients. Those case studies are organized in categories according to the content of their strategies and the reason for their success or failure. Interesting is also the fact that Matt Haig in his books doesn’t incorporate only corporations’ brands. We will see to analyze also the personal branding. His books may lack theoretical background (anyway that was not at his intentions) but are useful especially because they offer a lot of case studies from where we can draw conclusions comparing them. The comparative reading of his books together with more theoretical ones (such as the book of Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo “*Pro Logo*”) may help us to have practical examples that can complement and enrich the brand’s theory.

<sup>48</sup> See: Bruno Remaury, *Marcas y relatos. La marca frente al imaginario cultural contemporáneo*, Barcelona: Ediciones Gustavo Gili SA, 2005.

Bruno Remaury in his book “*Marcas y relatos*” analyzes the relationship that exists between the brands and their narration. He is interested in the cultural content of the brand’s imaginary. He tries to forecast which may be the consequences of the “culture of consumption” in our contemporary culture. He firstly analyzes the narration of several of the most important brands and in continuation he focuses on the fashion brands and the reasons for their success. The book of Bruno Remaury is a great contribution at the brands’ research since he focuses on the theme of the fashion brands, which, according to some brands’ theorists, are the brands par excellence. The book is also important because it highlights the cultural content of the brands and how the brands are connected with the collective culture.

<sup>49</sup> See: Melissa Davis, *More than a name: An introduction to branding*, Sussex: AVA Publishing, 2005.

The book of Melissa Devis is a guide to branding with theoretical and practical references. The interesting with that book is that she doesn’t remain at the superficiality of the subject accepting that the brand is its logo. She tries to investigate what is behind the logo and the brand-name. She is interested in the brand’s content and the brand’s identity, as well as the methods that can be used in order to construct that identity.

<sup>50</sup> The theoretical content of this chapter has been shaped by the reading of the books that we have mentioned in the previous chapter. As we will see, the brand’s strategy and the services’ strategy are strongly interrelated.

the shop is nearer to the house/office, it is ecological, it is easier to use, it is more efficient (based on specific records), the service is quicker, it has a better quality that can be measured or more than one of reasons combined. The categories on which a product or a service can be competitive can vary, depending the type of product or service, but normally has to do with its functionality, the economy, the coverage in case of failure or accident, etc. The base onto which the products or the services (which follow the services' strategy) compete between themselves<sup>51</sup> is a quantitative one. The quantitative characteristics of the services' strategies can be measured and can be compared using facts or specific records.

In this point we have to elucidate that the services' strategy (a positioning method) is not only applied to services, but also to products. For that reason, the first sentence of the above paragraph may puzzle. The commercial objects to which we refer (as possible objects to which this strategy/method can have implementation) may have physical presence (they are consequently products) or may not, are then intangible (so they belong to the services' category). Since with the term 'services' we may refer to a positioning method and as well to intangible commercial objects, we must be very careful when we use it. When we use the term 'services' (as a positioning method) in order to describe the tertiary sector that doesn't apply the branding (the other presented positioning method), obviously we refer to a strategy/method that can be implemented to intangible and tangible commercial subjects, that means to products and services, at the same time. Broadly in the bibliography and in the everyday use of the economic terms, the term services is applied on the positioning method that we explain, for that reason we use it thereby in the present thesis. Nonetheless, in order to make it clearer, every time we refer to the services as a marketing method, we associate the term with the term 'strategy' or 'method'.

The services' strategy (as a positioning method, which means a method to enter in the market or to compete from a more privilege position in the market) existed prior to the brand's strategy and it has the same content as now: to be competitive in quantitative terms, that can be measurable. The services' strategies (which at that time didn't have a name since it was the only one and didn't have the need of distinction) pre-existed to the brand's strategy, since the second, as we have seen in the previous chapter, appeared, for economical and social reasons, a specific historical period (related to the Mass Society). The old strategy (prior to the period when the brands had emerged) was applied to all the expressions of the commercial transactions (both of products and services) and was based on the quantitative differentiation. A product (e.g. a shirt) was more competitive because it was cheaper. A rendering of services (e.g. shoes-repair by the cobbler) was more competitive because it was quicker.

The emergence of the brands (which drew a line in the marketing field, giving the opportunity to follow a different strategy in order to position something in the market, using qualitative,

---

<sup>51</sup> We refer, for example, to the competition between products that follow services strategy, but we have to mention that the products compete also with those which follow brand's strategy. The same happens for the services. So, it seems that the situation get complicated in those cases where the competition is not between those which follow the same type of strategy, but it is more general and includes products or services which follow the opposite strategy. In those cases the strategy (no matter which type is) has to be flexible and capable to read the others strategy and to adapt to the changes. As we will mention later, in the reality there exist only mixed strategies. This helps since the strategy can be readjusted and it can change its components if the competition requires a similar decision.

non-measurable elements) has left the old strategy (which uses quantitative measurable facts) with the need of a name in order to be identified. We use the *services* as a name for that strategy (although it is still applied both to products and services, as it used to do prior to the emergence of the brands<sup>52</sup>) because the implementation of that strategy is more common at the services. In parallel the brand's strategy has better results when it is applied to products. So, in order to sum up, both strategies can be applied to products and services, but we may say that the services' strategy is more applied to the services and the brand's strategies to the products. Finally, we have to mention that this need for specification to which type of commercial object (and to what extent) is applied each of the two strategies is theoretical, since, as we will see, there is no pure strategy. Normally, for the positioning of a product or a service it is used a mix strategy, using elements from both of them, (besides other reasons) principally in order to be in the position to compete with all its competitive products or services; either they use mainly a services' strategy or a brand's strategy. That theoretical need for specification is helpful when we want to investigate the content of the mixed strategy, to what extent is used the one at the expense of the other.

Important factor that gives advantage to the services' strategy is that it has the capacity to change its content during the campaign. By lowering the price or offering something new, can be more attractive and change the actual conditions of the competition field. We have mentioned previously that the services' strategy, more of the times, combines factors (with different hierarchy), in order to formulate the final offer. For example, a product can be competitive on the level of the price and can have additionally a specific condition of services (in case of failure) and an easier way of function. The responsible for the positioning of the product at the market can change the hierarchy of those factors (in case of understanding that the product can't be competitive at the level of the price) and reinforce the competitiveness of the product, by giving more emphasis to the factor of service's coverage and the functionality of the product. With this change, the product can be more attractive, given the fact that the services' strategy can enforce the factors that continues to be competitive at the market and, in parallel, can reduce the importance of the factors that loses competitiveness. In this type of strategies (quite common to the sector of the services), can be incorporated the tactic of the integration of a new factor. In the example mentioned above, besides the three factors (economy, service's coverage and functionality), can be incorporated during the campaign (and not in advance) the factor of the product's ecologic awareness. In order to sum up, the most important advantage of the services' strategy is its capacity to change the factors (with which they compete) and to change the internal hierarchy with which they have been organized. In this way, the services' strategy seems to be easier to adapt to the dynamic and changing market and to be more flexible.

Finally, it would be necessary to highlight one more thing. The products or the services, which follow the services' strategy, compete each other on the base of a quantitative comparison of some factors that can be measures and compared. Since there are several factors that influence on the final decision, those factors and their quantitative records will be considered

---

<sup>52</sup> And the brand's strategy is applied both to products and services, as we have seen. So, it is wrong the conviction that some have that the borderline that separates the brand's strategy from the services' strategy is the line that separates the products from the services. Both strategies can be applied to products and to services.

jointly with the use of subjective coefficients, which depends on the hierarchy of the factors that the purchaser has in his mind. In any case, it seems, to a great extent, that the decision is made through a rational procedure (as much rational a human being can be) and there are not infiltrating subjective factors as it is the sentimental identification that exists in the case of the brands. To say it with other words, at the competition between products or services which follow services' strategy, the decision of the purchaser is based on his/her interests.

### **2.5.3. The services' strategy vs. the brand's strategy.**

We have dedicated previously two chapters to present the content and the function of the brand's strategy and the services' strategy, respectively. Those two strategies are used for the positioning in the market (or in the society, with the broader sense). As it is obvious, the brand's strategy is in the present thesis the one on which we focus. The services' strategy is the other important pole that we must have in mind in order to understand how the competition functions. We know already that the competition between the companies, the organizations, the institutions or the individuals does not happen separately in isolated groups (between the ones that follow the brand's strategy and those that follow the services' strategy), but they compete one with the others, indiscriminately what type of strategy they may use. The competition's field is common for all actors, whatever strategy they may have chosen to follow. We have mentioned that the companies, the organizations or the individuals choose the strategy that suits them better (according to their particular characteristics), but they do not choose the field where they have to compete. The field is the same for all of them and should have a response to all the challenges that may face, regardless if they come from a competitor's brand's strategy or a competitor's services' strategy. In that we must add one more thing that we will see also later. There is no pure strategy. In the theoretical models we investigate brand's strategy or services' strategy, as if there exist pure strategies. In the reality that does not happen. We will find out that the strategies are mixed, using different elements from the two models according to what interests them best and which is the competition that they have to face. Frequently the configuration of the mixed strategy changes during the campaign, depending on the challenges or the difficulties that the campaign will face. From all the above we can understand that the very good knowledge of both strategies is essential.

In this chapter we will try to compare the two strategies, in order to find out the most characteristic elements of each one and to understand better the brand's strategy that interest us more. As we know, methodologically, by contradicting a notion with another, it could be easier to reveal the main essence of that notion.

The first conclusion can be that at the services' strategy the competition is in a quantificational level, on contrary to what happen at the brand's strategies, where the comparison is in a qualitative level. We have seen that the services<sup>53</sup> compete with each other in a merely

---

<sup>53</sup> We have mentioned in the previous chapters, where we describe the brand's strategy and the services' strategy, that each one of them can be applied either to products or to services. For that, a services' strategy can be used for the promotion of a product or a service. The same happens with the brand's strategy. The name of each strategy is given in such way since the majority of the services do

quantificational manner. A service's company is more successful if it's bigger, if it has more service centers, if it can serve quicker, cheaper, more efficient, with better quality of services and created products. The service companies are better if they can be "more ... than" its competitors. It is easy to compare because the comparison can be measured. The brands, by nature, can't be compared in a quantificational level<sup>54</sup>. The customers acquire a brand product because they want (with its use, for example by wearing it) to acquire (to appropriate) the brand's values (and lifestyle). The customers acquire the brand's imaginary, the story which lies behind it. So, in the case of the brands, there is not a direct competition between them in the mind of the individual customer (as we find it in the case of the services) at the time that the customer has to make his choice. There is a predisposition to buy a product from a specific brand, because the imaginary is more attractive, because it suits better at the customer's way of living. The whole competition has been transferred: a) in another level and b) in a time previously to the moment of the purchase. That means: a) the competition has been transferred at the level of the creation of brand's imaginary, where the most attractive imaginary will gain the support of the customers, where the most beloved story will challenge the customers to associate their everyday life with it. And b) the real competition between the brands is during the period where the customer defines in his mind what each of the brands signifies, what it represents. By the moment that he has created specific conclusions, the predisposition that we have mentioned before is responsible for his consumption's behavior. Whenever there is a predisposition, the consumption's activity is intuitive and compulsory.

In order to be more accurate, we should use the verb "compete" for the services and the verb "compare" for the brands. The services compete between themselves but the brands can only be compared on the base of their imaginary. At the services the choice is a rational procedure, at the brands the non-rational part of the decision plays an important role. Since the services compete in a quantificational level, their criteria can be measured and on that quantitative information the choice can be rational. Since the brands are compared on the base of their imaginary, the criteria are subjective and as a consequence they leave enough space to the non-rational decision's mechanisms. Given the strong emotional bond between the brands and their followers, frequently the brands are chosen with the heart, contrary to the services that are chosen with the mind. The choice between the services is based on the consumer's interest (e.g. the cheapest one). On the contrary, the choice between the brands is based on the consumer's desire. The services are perceived more neutral from the consumers, for that reason they can do strictly rational choices. The brands generate a certain passion (positive or negative, admiration or hate) which "invade" during the decision. The services' strategies are more static; the brand's strategies can be more expansive, can

---

use the service's strategy and frequently the products of competitive corporations do use the brand's strategy. In order to simplify the text in this chapter we speak only about services when we refer to the services' strategy. The same happens to the brand's strategy, where we speak more about products. But we should have in mind that the real situation is more complicated.

<sup>54</sup> Naomi Klein in her book "*No Logo*" offers an interesting example. Marlboro, against the logic of a brand's strategy, he had made an unprecedented decision. Being a brand, it decided to compete in a quantificational level and it offered a discount to its packet of cigarette, believing that it will be more competitive. The consequence was their clients to be confused with its tactic and to have the opposite results from what it has aimed initially. This example can show us how fragile is a brand and what will be the consequences if wrong decisions would alter the brand's strategy. See: Naomi Klein, *No Logo*, op. cit., 13-14. Chapter one: New branded world, subchapter: The Brands bounce back.

be the vehicle for a company, an organization or an individual to expand its activities to other fields, maintaining the same imaginary and the same brand's content.

The services follow existing paths and trying to improve them. There are predefined patterns that can be used, management's tactics that can be applied. The brands are mainly an invention (regarding the imaginary that they construct); a creation that affects all the levels of its content. They have an autonomous existence and for that reason it is hard to compare them with the others. The services can be defined accurately by their characteristics. The brands' content couldn't be easily explained. The brand's story (its trajectory and how it managed to reach the success) is the most significant part of its content, which can explain better and more effectively its real essence.

If the brands contain a story, a Narrative; the services can be expressed by the Curriculum Vitae. The Narrative can interpret the trajectory that the brand had followed, its history; can describe the brand's content. The Curriculum Vitae can create a hyper-organized structure of the services' vantage points; can be an imposing mechanism that can persuade the potential clients. Being the Narrative and the Curriculum Vitae important for our analysis, we will refer to them more extensively in the next chapter.

#### **2.5.4. Narrative vs. Curriculum Vitae.**

The thesis felt the necessity to find a term for each strategy that can express them better. And an analog to the dipole "*services vs. brand*" that can express the conflict that exists between the two strategies. We propose the Narrative as a term that can explain the way that the brands function and the Curriculum Vitae as a term that characterizes the content of the services. The antithesis "*services vs. brands*" can be transformed to the dipole "*Curriculum Vitae vs. Narrative*".

As we have seen, the brands are based on their complex content, which, since it is not measurable, is very difficult to be explained. Their imaginary exists in the level of the ideas and describes a way of living, a position towards life. It is a proposal to the possible customers to adopt the values of the brand in their everyday life. It is a well-structured and compact story that contains a narration. As a story, it can be explained better by a Narrative. Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo, at their book "*Pro Logo*", they present the Narrative as a medium that can explain the content of the brand. For that reason, they propose a "*narrative scheme*"<sup>55</sup> that can be used as an analytical tool for the better construction, in the first place, of the Narrative, and afterwards for the control of the brand's content. In that direction the two economists propose the semiotic method<sup>56</sup> (strongly interrelated with the Narrative) as a tool for the analysis of the brands, and conclude with something very interesting, two questions, through which we can understand better the brands: a) "*With what*

<sup>55</sup> See: M. Chevalier and G. Mazzalovo, *Pro Logo*, op. cit., 148-150.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 150-152. We remind that Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo, in their attempt to describe the brand's content, they spoke of "*ethical and aesthetical 'semiotic invariables' of the brand*" (*Ibid.*, 34), introducing the semiotics at the heart of the brand's analysis.

to dream?”<sup>57</sup> and b) “*What to dream?*”<sup>58</sup>. Through the dream, the creative mechanism to construct a fiction, we come back to the imaginary, the base of the brand’s strategy.

On the contrary, the Curriculum Vitae is a well defined structure that can represent better the services’ strategy. The main interest of the services is to project towards the society their vantage points, their strong cards that can persuade the potential customers to prefer them than the competitors. It could not be found a better structure for the record of the services’ strong positions than the structure of the Curriculum Vitae. The Curriculum Vitae is a construction, where there are recorded all the positive points of an individual or an organization. There is no space for the failures. Contains only the positive aspects and the content is strictly organized, using the hierarchy from the most important to the less interesting. The content can be restructured, depending on which will be its use and who is going to receive it.

From the comparison of the Curriculum Vitae with the Narrative we can draw some interesting conclusions. Firstly, the Curriculum Vitae can’t contain the failures. The Narrative can include them. More than that, the Narrative can be more interesting if it contains the failures. We may remind here the film’s scripts which can be more interesting and attractive as they present a more human story, with its failures and its difficult moments. The Narrative as more human is, more attractive it can become. On the contrary, as strong and powerful is the structure of the Curriculum Vitae, more valuable it can be considered.

Secondly, the Narrative has a more fluid and unitary form, which with a smooth manner can describe (narrate) the brand’s story. On the other hand, it cannot change its final form, because that can confuse the “readers”-customers. On the contrary, the Curriculum Vitae has a strong, rough structure that can be flexible and can change the hierarchy of its components easily, if the competition needs a radical change. At the Narrative prevails the form. At the Curriculum Vitae prevails the structure. The Narrative can’t change easily its discourse; the change (if there is any) should be smooth. The Curriculum Vitae can change its component’s hierarchy according to whom it is addressed. The changes can be more radical and quick.

Third, the Narrative can have a multiple audience. It can be addressed to various receivers. Its more vague and undefined content can be perceived by various individuals with a different way. In this way, it can be more expansive. The Curriculum Vitae needs to be transformed and restructured if it wants to refer to a different type of receivers. Its hyper-defined content does not permit to be open to various readings.

### **2.5.5. There is no pure brand. Strategies that compound the services and the brands.**

The positioning strategies are never pure, just following the brand’s model or the services’ model. In the vast majority of the cases, the companies, for reasons of better adaptation to the circumstances or in order to acquire an advantage point in the competition with their

---

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 163-164.

adversaries have mixed strategies combining the two models together. In the previous chapters (2.5.1 and 2.5.2) we have followed an abstraction procedure, have tried to isolate the strategies in order to investigate them. In that abstraction procedure we have imagined that a company, an institution or a person had followed a 100% brand's strategy or a 100% services' strategy, in order to reflect on what can be the results of those strategies. Obviously the above pure models are theoretical ones. There exist some positioning strategies on behalf of corporations or individuals that approximate, for example the pure brand's strategy, as it is the case of Apple. Those cases can help us to have a safe estimation of which can be the results of the pure strategies. But, at the end of the day, we must bear in mind that practically there are no pure strategies. On the contrary, the more successful strategies maybe are those that have the capacity to manoeuvre, to use the right combination of the two strategies as a response to the market reality and at the crucial moments to be able to readjust the strategy, changing the mixture and using different tactics.

The mixed strategy (combination of brand's and services' model) is something normal that appears even to the advanced brands (from the well-known corporations, like Nike, Mc Donald's etc) which follow the most sophisticated brand's strategies. At those mixed strategies, the brands had used as base the brand's strategy and had incorporated some elements from the services' strategies (borrowed them from the world of the services) in order to be able to compete with them too. [*For the mixed strategies in architecture, see chapter 4.1.*].

#### **2.5.6. The services' strategy and the brand's strategy in Architecture. Gensler vs. Gehry.**

In the previous chapters we have presented the content of the brand's and the services' strategy. We had tried, through the comparison of those strategies, to highlight the differences that exist between those two. In this chapter we will have as an aim to see how those strategies can be applied in architecture. We consider that the best way would be to use two examples of architectural offices that employ one of the analyzed strategies. In this way, we can have a comparison of the two strategies and, at the same time, we can see some details of their implementation in architecture. We have chosen Art Gensler for the services' strategy and Frank Gehry for the brand's strategy. Those two examples are not chosen randomly. The first has one of the biggest architectural firms with hundreds of architects-employees and a series of offices in several part of the world and the second is perhaps the most well-known architect<sup>59</sup> (especially after the Guggenheim effect) because of his attractive forms and his capacity to generate buildings-icons.

Art Gensler is the principal of Gensler Architects. At the raking of the architectural offices that the magazine "*Building Design*" elaborates every year (based on information related to the

---

<sup>59</sup> According to Rafael Moneo: "*I believe it can be stated, to wide consensus, that his work [of Frank Gehry] has been the most influential in the eighties*". See: Rafael Moneo, *Theoretical anxiety and design strategies: in the work of eight contemporary architects*, Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 2004, 254.



number of employees, the offices and the annual income), in 2007 was number one, with 1216 architects-employees, 31 offices and more than 250 million dollars income. For comparison reasons, let mention that Foster is at the fifth position, SOM at the sixth and Koolhaas at number 40. Frank Gehry is not at that list. At the top 10<sup>60</sup>, all the mentioned firms can be considered architectural offices that follow the services' strategy<sup>61</sup>.

Art Gensler for the first years of his professional career had shown his tendency to the services' strategy. In order to earn the favor of his clients, he has designed a strategy for the optimization of his office, with aim to be more productive. He has started in 1965 in San Francisco with small commissions related to the adaptation of offices at the needs of its new tenants. He offered obviously services of interior design. He started with professional success, since he didn't have significant competence. The majority of the architects despise such commissions, believing that those corresponded to interior designers. He professionalized the reforms, offering to his clients high-standard professional services. On contrary with the above, Gensler focuses at solving problems and not only at the aesthetic part of his work.

Gensler Architects now do the majority of the Apple stores, including the biggest one: Apple store at Regent Street, in London. Another of his clients is GAP, having designed more than 3000 stores for that brand. Evidence that he has one of the best architectural offices with service oriented-strategy is that he had created a special department in his firm in order to attend at the needs of the GAP commissions. The capacity to readjust the structure of his firm according to the needs of its clients is characteristic of the services' strategy. Eduard Sancho Pou, who had thoroughly analyzed the strategy of Gensler, describes at his PhD thesis how Gensler met the founder of GAP<sup>62</sup> in San Francisco in 1969. The biggest success is not that he managed to have the first commission, but that he succeeded to maintain his loyalty for 40 years.

As Eduard Sancho Pou explains: *"He [Gensler] doesn't have a personal design that can be identified with his office. He is not faithful to a particular style, he just adopts the client's one. When they ask him if there exists a Gensler's style, he answers no, 'exists the quality Gensler, based on the adaptation to the budget and the agenda'. But more than everything, he leans on the strategies. Art Gensler has replaced the classic 'form follows function' with the 'function follows strategy'. He doesn't only offer design at the client, but also knowledge.*

---

<sup>60</sup> If we except Foster & partners office (that is fifth), which according to our analysis can be perceived as one that follows a mixed strategy with strong elements from the services' model. The elaboration of that list helps us to understand that, at least according to economical facts, the service-oriented architectural firms are more successful. The biggest architectural firms are not so much known in the architectural community and surely are not part of the everyday discussion between the architects. There is not any type of analysis or research on their work. It seems that we are educated to research and analyze more the brand-oriented architectural offices, through the various architectural magazines (printed or electronic). But we must not be misguided, especially when we have information as the aforementioned list with the architectural ranking. The service-oriented architectural firms tend to be bigger and more successful economically.

<sup>61</sup> The following 9 architectural firms that complete the top 10 of that list are: HOK, Nikken Sekkei, Aedas, Foster & Partners, Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM), BDP international, RMJM, HKS and Atkins. Just in order to form a more precise idea, the firm that is at the tenth position (Atkins) has around to 620 architects-employees and an income of 140 million dollars.

<sup>62</sup> See: Eduard Sancho Pou, "Estrategias de Comercialización en la Arquitectura", PhD Thesis, ETSAB, 2010, 272.

List with the 20 largest practices in architecture (2007), elaborated by the Building Design magazine

#### WORLD'S LARGEST PRACTICES

2007	2006		PRACTICE NAME	COUNTRY	MAIN TYPE	ARCHITECTS 2007	ARCHITECTS 2006	EST CHANGE IN ARCHITECTS 2008	FEE INCOME (US\$ MILLIONS)
1	2	↑	<b>Gensler</b>	USA	A	1,216	952	10	Over 250m
2	3	↑	<b>HOK</b>	USA	A	1,205	884	1	Over 250m
3	1	↓	<b>Nikken Sekkei</b>	Japan	M	1,174	1,083		Over 250m
4	4	⊙	<b>Aedas</b>	UK	A	1,020	877	16	200-209m
5	8	↑	<b>Foster &amp; Partners</b>	UK	A	913	564	35	180-189m
6	5	↓	<b>Skidmore Owings &amp; Merrill</b>	USA	M	838	750	5	230-239m
7	6	↓	<b>BDP International</b>	UK	M	717	672	5	130-139m
8	22	↑	<b>RMJM</b>	UK	A	709	316	15	110-119m
9	10	↑	<b>HKS</b>	USA	A	651	522	20	190-199m
10	26=	↑	<b>Atkins</b>	UK	M	622	287	13	140-149m
11	11	⊙	<b>P&amp;T Architects and Engineers</b>	China	A	572	500	15	80-89m
12	9	↓	<b>RTKL Associates</b>	USA	A	556	525		210-219m
13	26=	↑	<b>Woods Bagot</b>	Australia	A	538	287	25	80-89m
14	12=	↓	<b>Perkins Eastman</b>	USA	A	520	456	10	130-139m
15	14	↓	<b>SmithGroup</b>	USA	M	459	441		100-109m
16	32	↑	<b>Capita Architecture</b>	UK	A	450	235	10	70-79m
17	12=	↓	<b>NBBJ</b>	USA	A	442	456	0	150-159m
18	18	⊙	<b>Callison</b>	USA	A	437	382	10	130-139m
19	19	⊙	<b>Burt Hill</b>	USA	A	390	353	15	70-79m
20	20	⊙	<b>Nihon Sekkei</b>	Japan	A	379	350	5	110-119m

Various architectural offices that appear in the above list

2007	2006		PRACTICE NAME	COUNTRY	MAIN TYPE	ARCHITECTS 2007	ARCHITECTS 2006	EST CHANGE IN ARCHITECTS 2008	FEE INCOME (US\$ MILLIONS)
5	8	↑	<b>Foster &amp; Partners</b>	UK	A	913	564	35	180-189m
6	5	↓	<b>Skidmore Owings &amp; Merrill</b>	USA	M	838	750	5	230-239m
40	82=	↑	<b>Office for Metropolitan Architecture</b>	Holland	A	225	105	15	60-69m
51	—	New	<b>Herzog &amp; de Meuron</b>	Switzerland	A	188			n/a
71	—	New	<b>Grimshaw</b>	UK	A	148	63	5	30-39m
78=	95=	↑	<b>David Chipperfield Architects</b>	UK	A	125	95	15	10-19m
83=	82=	↓	<b>Coop Himmelblau</b>	Austria	A	120	105	10	40-49m



*Projects from Gensler Architects*



*Before he designs a building, helps the client to evaluate the investment, the cost and how will affect his project the whole market. He accompanies the client during all the process, from the selection of the terrain, until the construction. Be wherever he has to be, cost whatever it costs, he remains beside his client, in order to understand his way of working and help him to optimize the means. Additionally, Gensler is interested in the way that his client earns his income, in order to help him to profit from his investments. Gensler doesn't search either for project managers or specialized contractors. He is the one who leads the project and, up to now, the market has favored him"*<sup>63</sup>.

For Eduard Sancho Pou, Gensler sells strategies and knowledge more than anything else: *"Being operative worldwide, he knows well what works and what doesn't. Apple hires him for that knowledge, despite that Apple has its own design and strategy. Gensler knows what he sells, has the experience and the information that can permit him to know in advance if the store will be a success or not. But also he uses all this information to design buildings. It is at this point that the architectural project loses against the strategic project. The work of Gensler becomes wider, as he intends to assist his client 'totally'. Gensler specifies him the best place to build, adjusts the building to the client's needs and even searches for the best constructor with the best economical offer. The role of consultant permits Gensler to control better the final result of the building and, at the same time, to ensure higher revenues for his architectural firm"*<sup>64</sup>.

The above description is nothing more than a description of a service-oriented architectural firm. Maybe the key term is "consultant". The consulting procedure perhaps is in the core of the services' strategy. In the field of the service-oriented firms, the one that can offer the total consulting services can have a successful career in that professional field.

According to Eduard Sancho Pou<sup>65</sup>, Art Gensler all those years of his professional career had passed from various phases, offering to his clients different type of services. From the *"schematic design, design development and construction documents"* of the 60' he passed at the *"programming"* (study of the organization's needs) of the 70' and then at the *"strategic facilities planning"* (a type of 'total service') of the 80'. Now the firm of Gensler has an *"account relationship"* with the clients. That means that he has a client to serve his general spatial needs and not a specific project. He and his firm is in charge of all that his clients may need: previous of the design research in order to specify the needs, consulting for real estate issues, total design, contracting the constructors, supervision of the construction, etc. Additionally to that (something that shows the service' character of his firm) he has access to the budget and manages it, in order to ensure the right execution.

Eduard Sancho Pou explains better the *"account relationship"* with the clients: *"As a consultant he has even varied the concept of 'commission'. If in the first years they commissioned him specific projects, now they commission him 'accounts'. Gensler opens an account with a client and from that moment he is devoted to manage their properties, to expand, adapt and optimize them. But it was necessary to pass from several phases to reach*

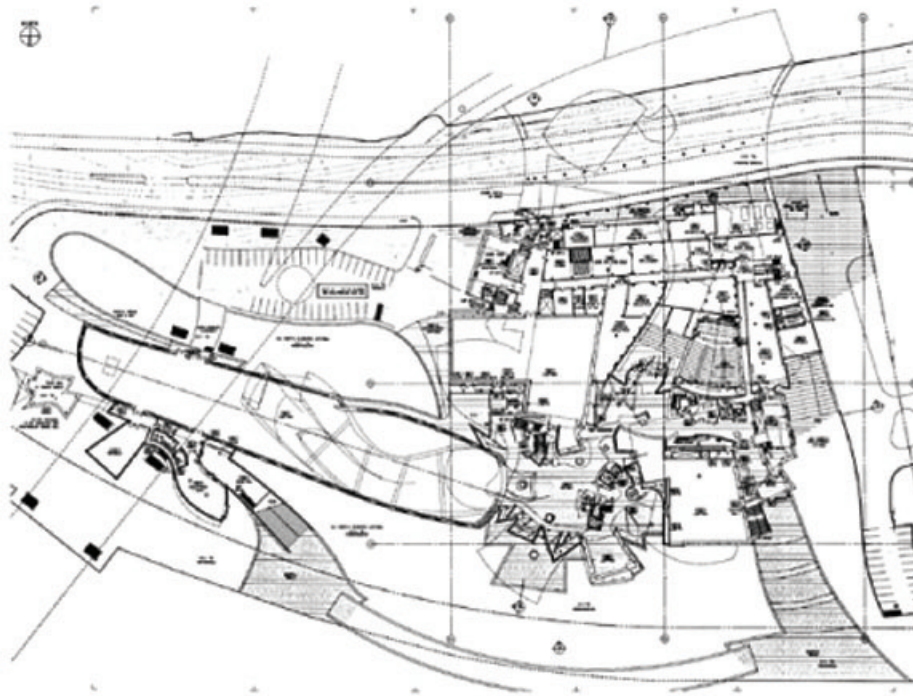
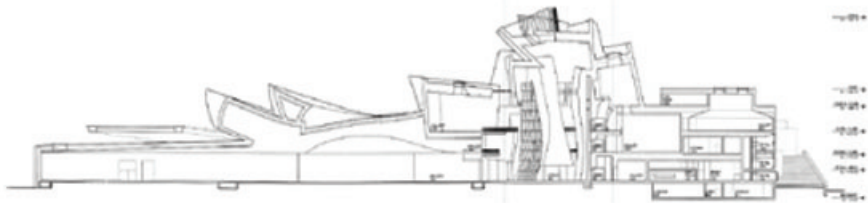
---

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

F. Gehry, Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao



*this 'total service' concept. Being always at the client's side, Gensler grows with him and adapts to his needs*<sup>66</sup>.

As Eduard Sacho Pou concludes<sup>67</sup>, Art Gensler, from designing buildings he dedicates his recent professional period to design strategies. This point may be the most crucial in the attempt to understand the service-oriented architectural firms. The focus of those offices (despite of their scale) are not on the project but on the strategy: how to offer a complete packet of services, a "total" service as they used to say, to the clients in order to cover all possible needs. There is a displacement of the attention, from the content of the specific project to the fulfillment of the clients' needs, which come before and after the design of the architectural projects and sometimes do not have to do with architecture.

If Gensler focuses on the strategy and, through that, on the services that can offer to his clients, Frank Gehry focuses on the project and more specifically on its form. Being a formalist architect, the form is the medium to express his ideas and his positions related to the role of architecture in the society and its spatial environment. Having the form a protagonist role in the Gehry's architecture, we must pay particular attention to the method with which his form has been generated, on which architectural elements it is based and finally what that form represents.

Rafael Moneo in his book "*Theoretical anxiety and design strategies*"<sup>68</sup> had analyzed thoroughly Gehry's architecture and for that reason the thesis believes that the results of his analysis can help the present research. Moneo highlights that the form is the main characteristic of Gehry's architecture but he makes a distinction between the method with which the form has been produced before the Vitra project and the one afterwards. For Moneo, in the first period of Gehry, we observe a strong interrelation between the program and the form, which, although exists also in the period after the Vitra project, his importance diminishes. In the second period gains importance the computer generated form, which permits Gehry to liberate the design procedure from the initial much more strong dependence of form from the program.

Gehry in an interview that he had with Barbaralee Diamonstein in 1980 (during his first period) explains: "*What I like doing best is breaking down the project into as many separate parts as possible... So instead of a house being one thing, it's ten things. It allows the client more involvement*"<sup>69</sup>. Explaining the above, Moneo writes: "*The rupture of the oneness of a work is not a merely aesthetic matter. It has other important implications. Above all, it allows a freer analysis of the program*"<sup>70</sup> and "*So Gehry starts out by dismembering a program. A house is dismantled, and uses are identified with forms*"<sup>71</sup>. It seems that the design strategy of Gehry is to dismantle the program in specific uses, which, in continuation, will associate each of them

---

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 272-273.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>68</sup> Rafael Moneo, *Theoretical anxiety and design strategies: in the work of eight contemporary architects*, Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 2004.

<sup>69</sup> See: Barbaralee Diamonstein, "*American Architecture Now*", New York: Rizzoli, 1980.

<sup>70</sup> R. Moneo, *Theoretical anxiety and design strategies*, op. cit., 257.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

with a specific form. Forms, in that case, are elemental figures. The final complex is the result of the re-composition of the fragmented spaces.

After the Vitra project, Gehry not only creates new forms with a different medium (CAD<sup>72</sup>), which has the implication that his forms have different composition, but also his architecture has a different character. His architecture, instead of being the re-composition of the fragmented spaces, it has unitary continuity (we refer to his last projects), a fluid space that represents a type of “movement”<sup>73</sup>. Rafael Moneo writes: “Gehry, liberated from the repertoire of preexisting forms, transforms himself into what he so much wanted to be, an inventor of forms. The latest Gehry, the Gehry of the Guggenheim, models his architecture with absolute freedom”<sup>74</sup>. And he continues: “Particularly since the Vitra project, I’ve observed an interest in a peculiar vision of the meaning of a unitary, continuous architecture. Perhaps Gehry has perceived symptoms of exhaustion in the mechanism of recomposing the fragmentary, in the procedure that follows the dismantling of a program, and is now attracted to an architecture where a breath of the unitary makes itself felt”<sup>75</sup>.

Although there can be observed differences in what are and what represent the forms for Gehry in the two distinctive period that we have referred, the form continues to be for him his trade-mark, the one that characterizes him and make his architecture recognizable. The forms are always a direct and personal expression of Gehry. We have already implied (using the word trade-mark) that Gehry uses a brand’s strategy. A brand’s strategy directly related with his forms, which despites the changes during his career, continue to be very strongly associated with him. That maybe has to do with particular characteristics that maintain the same during the generation of the forms, with the use of the colors and, more than that, with the use of the materials<sup>76</sup> and the textures.

There is also one more thing that is directly associated with Gehry: His architectural models. Not only as a representation media, but more than that as tools that have been used for the elaboration of his forms. Even in his more recent period, when the CAD programs have entered with force at his design procedure, the model continues to have a key role in Gehry’s office. Rafael Moneo is right when he explains how important the model is for him: “He anticipates the future through the model. The model becomes the vehicle of the work. The architect touches the pieces, feels them, and in this direct contact with the pieces the form of the construction is forged. Such proximity to the gestation of the architecture suits the architect. The idea is to eliminate outside mediation or interference. For Gehry, hence, models are not mere reductions – or versions at another scale – of future reality. They are

---

<sup>72</sup> It seems that with the CAD programs a world of unlimited forms had opened before him.

<sup>73</sup> The movement, as a concept, is important for the Gehry’s architecture. Rafael Moneo remembers: “Gehry has sometimes spoken of movement in architecture as an alternative to ornament”. *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 305.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 263..

<sup>76</sup> Rafael Moneo, at his analysis, pays attention to the materials: “He enjoys manipulating the materials that the building industry puts at his disposal. Like some artists of his generation, he explores the potential that materials have when not used conventionally. Hence the continuous exploration of the textures in his work. A fresh look at construction and materials creates a new architecture”. *Ibid.*, 260-261.

*architectures in themselves. The challenge of the architect is to maintain the immediacy of the model in the actual building*<sup>77</sup>.

The architectural models, the way that he works, the composition's mechanism of his form, all of them lead to the heart of his brand's content: the uniqueness of his architecture. For Gehry architecture is art and for that reason should be unique. Perhaps his admiration for the artist and his proximity to them had formed that conviction. And maybe for that reason his most important architectural projects are related to the world of the art. Architecture as art is, in a way, his architectural imaginary that had created and had associated with his brand's strategy. Rafael Moneo can describe that better: *"Gehry likes to maintain the aura of the individual and unique that accompanies any work of art. Paradoxically, the weakness of his work is offset by its very nature as a singular, unique work of art. Indeed his works are fragile, especially the earliest ones. His work is weak in the most literal sense of the word, as befits anything that is part of the ephemeral and ever-changing context of Los Angeles. And a fragile object will only survive if considered a work of art. In L.A., a building deserves to be preserved only if it is considered a work of art. The durability of a building doesn't come so much from the resistance of the materials used, but from the value conferred upon it by its being considered a work of art. Paradoxically, spirit lasts longer than matter"*<sup>78</sup>.

In this chapter we had tried to bring together two completely different examples. It seems that each one comes from a different world. Maybe because they are two strongly opposed cases. The first follows a services' strategy, where a well-organized mechanism has been created in order to satisfy the need of the clients. The second follows a brand's strategy, where the project is important, it maintains its autonomy and the quality of the architecture is derived from the creation of the appropriate form. In the first case the architect steps back ceding the leading role to the client. In the second case, the protagonist is indisputably the architect. Through this contradiction we believe that the different contents of each strategy and the tools that it uses can emerge. Maybe the only common thing in those two examples is the passion that the two architects have for what they do...

## **2.6. Architecture and City: Rem Koolhaas' reflections on the Mass Society.**

In order to discover the relationship between the Architecture and the City, in the Era of the Mass Society, important is to study the approach of Rem Koolhaas towards those topics. Rem Koolhaas is one of the major architect-thinkers of the contemporary society. Is one of the few architects, active in the procedure of design and construction, who has a theoretical capacity, a personal view on the role of the contemporary architect in the society and strong

---

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 258-259.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.





*Gehry's models*

opinion on the role of the city and the urban life in the Mass Society<sup>79</sup>. We may say that he almost exclusively begins his public presentations from the city; he is committed in the study of the metropolitan effect and the analysis of the urban dimension of architecture<sup>80</sup>, the city and its life is in the core of his thinking, and additionally has promoted any type of urban studies in the academic community.

His architectural reflections and his architectural design are directly related to the Mass Society. We can say that his methods for designing his architectural projects are dictated by a broader understanding of the society and by the necessity to reflect our social condition on architecture. He is one of the architects that has directly connected his architectural activity with the analysis of the contemporary Mass Society and has tried to explain his architecture through the interpretation of the Mass Society. This condition is represented at his office's name: "Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA)". His principal concept for the analysis of the contemporary society, its cities and the new metropolises is the notion of "congestion". On this term is reflected the core of the Mass Society, the main condition of our coexistence and the method to produce contemporary architecture that can represent the current situation.

Although we will refer to Rem Koolhaas' work as case study in the last chapter, where we will investigate the architectural strategies as an instrument for the development of the Architecture in the Mass Society, we refer to Rem Koolhaas in this chapter dedicated to the Mass Society, in order to define better the relationships between the conception of the current society (its functional model) and the contemporary architecture. And Rem Koolhaas maybe is the best example to do so. His theoretical dedication to the analysis of the Mass Society, his architectural design connected explicitly to the recent changing in our society and his disposition to create a brand architectural office that can work with the same mechanism and methods as the other contemporary brands, permit us to use his trajectory together with his architectural production as an example, as an interpretive model of the relationship between the Architecture and the present Mass Society.

In a period (mainly the last two decades) when the contemporary architects, dedicating his work in the design of building-objects, distance themselves from the urban theory and don't preoccupy for the adaptation of architecture in the urban tissue and, more generally speaking,

---

<sup>79</sup> The congestion is the term which Rem Koolhaas more uses in order to explain the life in the contemporary Metropolis. This term is very near to the content of the Mass Society, as the thesis conceives it. A similar term that he uses in order to connect its urban theory with the architectural design is: the density. We must also highlight a phrase that Rem Koolhaas has used at the beginning of his career frequently and has determined his work: "the culture of congestion". With this phrase he give emphasis to the fact that the congestion is not simply a condition of the Mass Society, but it generates also a particular culture which he tries to express through his projects. Maybe, the more expressive projects related with the culture of the congestion are the competition for the La Villette Park in Paris (1982-1983), the Bibliotheque de France (again in Paris) (1989) and the Center for Art and Media Technology in Karlsruhe (1989). In this set of projects we should maybe incorporate another important one, the design of the Intermodal Station of Lille (1994).

<sup>80</sup> Juan Antonio Cortes in his analysis of Koolhaas' theoretical background (at the monograph that El Croquis has dedicated to Koolhaas) remains persistently at the urban dimension of architecture. There we read: "*One of the basic goals of Rem Koolhaas since the start of his career in 1970 has been to defend the urban dimension of architecture, to consider architecture as part of the urban infrastructure and events. He has made this clear in his texts as well as in his planned and built work which, within the possibilities afforded by each case, strive to make room for the diversified dimensions of the urban experience and the complexity of metropolitan life*". See: J. A. Cortes, "Delirious and More. I. The lessons of the skyscraper", op. cit., 9.

to the urban life; Rem Koolhaas, in parallel to his architectural project, designs at the bigger scales<sup>81</sup> and reflects on the contemporary city. The book that he wrote and it generated the biggest impact was: “*Delirious New York: a retroactive manifesto for Manhattan*”<sup>82</sup> which was an interpretation of the Mass Society with architectural terms. Was the definition of the contemporary Metropolises where the congestion is a determined factor. His book: “*S,M,L,XL*”<sup>83</sup> was a conciliation attempt of the different architectural scales (maybe with an interest to interpret the reality in the European continent). The images of that book (and in smaller extend the texts) are his conception of the Mass Society. In that book, his text: “*The Generic City*”, as we will see later, maybe is his most interesting attempt to present his thesis on the contemporary cities in the Mass Society and how architecture may function inside the present Metropolises.

Maybe one of the first interpretations of the notion of “congestion”, through the architectural projects that Koolhaas has designed, is his participation at the competition for the City Hall of the Hague (The Netherlands, 1986). In that, the term of congestion had been applied in the European continent with an complex design that has as aim to shape a massive building (due to a big and complicated program) in such a way (thanks to the division of the volume in smaller volumes) that the whole program will fit in and at the same time it will have the appropriate architectural scale in order to adapt to the city. This project maybe is the first in his work (after returning to Netherlands from United States) that reflects his opinion for the architectural design in the contemporary Metropolises. This project is important because it permits us to understand his early architectural statements about the relationship between the city and the architectural project in it and how should we design in those types of urban situations. The project makes obvious that the city is directly reflected to the taken architectural decisions, that the form of the city maybe is part of the formation strategy of that architectural project.

The massive character of the eastern societies (especially the Chinese one) has permitted him to express his concept of congestion and his interpretation of the contemporary massification in some of his recent architectural projects, designed for the new eastern metropolises (for example, the CCTV building in China). His obsession with the massiveness and the congestion is obvious in all chapters of the “*Content*”<sup>84</sup> book, that book-magazine that

---

<sup>81</sup> See his influential text: Rem Koolhaas, “Bigness; or the problem of Large” in Rem Koolhaas and Bru Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, New York: Taschen, 1995, 495-516. One of the most important parts of that text that approach of koolhaas to Bigness is: “*Bigness no longer needs the city; it competes with the city; it represents the city; it preempts the city; or better still, it is the city*”, *Ibid.*, 515. A interesting article that analyses in depth the aforementioned text of Koolhaas is the next one: Jorge Otero-Pailos, “‘Bigness’ in context: some regressive tendencies in Rem Koolhaas’ urban theory”, *City*, Vol. 4, no. 3 (2000), 379-389.

<sup>82</sup> See: Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: a retroactive manifesto for Manhattan*, New York: The Monacelli Press, 1994. For his reference to the “culture of congestion” and the role of density, see: *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>83</sup> See: Rem Koolhaas and Bru Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, New York: Taschen, 1995. We have already referred to his text “Bigness”, which has a great impact, since he introduced the theme of bigness in relationship to the city and the architecture. Another important text, to which we refer in this chapter and of course at the analysis of the OMA/Koolhaas as a case-study (chapter 5) is “*the Generic City*” (*Ibid.*, 1248-1264), which should be consider as a Manifesto for the contemporary architecture and a lot of his positions can be found there (hidden, sometimes, behind a cynical and ironic language).

<sup>84</sup> See: Rem Koolhaas, *Content*, Koln: ed. Taschen, 2004. The massiveness is present as theme at various chapters of this book. Characteristic is the analysis that he does for Lagos (*Ibid.*, 276-289) or

his architectural office prepared (as the next step after SMLXL) in order to promote his work, and more than that, his ideas. His constant “journey” from the one Megalopolis to the other, from New York to Peking and from there to Laos, shows us his (desperate) necessity to make obvious his main opinion that the major activities do take place in those types of urban agglomerations. For him, the Mass Society is important, is the main factor and for that reason, his ideas can better be shown in the Metropolis, where the Mass Society makes his true and clear appearance.

In order to understand better his ideas about the contemporary city, we should refer to one of his major texts, the “Generic City”, which appears in the “SMLXL” book. “*The Generic City*”, forerunner of the “*JunkSpace*”<sup>85</sup> (that appears in the “*Content*” Book) is an enigmatic, ambiguous and difficult text (exactly because sometimes he is literally speaking and some others uses his well-known irony) that makes us to semi-understand (never understand completely, with accuracy) his thesis about the contemporary city and its content. He may not use directly the phrase “Mass Society”, but he is constantly referring to it, through the description of the life in the Generic City<sup>86</sup>. I strongly believe that through that text of Rem Koolhaas, we may understand the strong influence that our contemporary society (with its massiveness as its major characteristic) has on his thinking and design.

## **In parallel: (parallel reading 1)**

### **P.1.1. The critical mass.**

The massiveness is one of the main characteristics of the contemporary society. The construction of the Mass Society<sup>87</sup> is directly connected with the procedure of its massification. That means its capacity to increase the number of its members and to be at the same time functional. A Society is named Massive when the members that participate in it,

---

the analysis that Ellen Grimes does for Chicago: Ellen Grimes, “Black Metropolis; Life and Death in Bronzeville” in Rem Koolhaas, *Content*, Koln: ed. Taschen, 2004, 172-183.

<sup>85</sup> R. Koolhaas, *Content*, op. cit., 162-171. If we observe the form of this text, a continuum without paragraphs and sections, we will understand that it is a different one, in comparison with other texts of the same author (e.g. the Generic City, which moves at the opposite side, with sections and points that make comprehensive its structure). The lack of structure together with the torrential form of the text, with the intensity and the dynamism of the flow of a river, predispose us for the content and the aim of that text. It gives me the impression that is written by a different Koolhaas, who (in this time) wants to express his ideas, without indenting to impose them on the reader.

<sup>86</sup> As we have mentioned, Koolhaas doesn't refer literary to the Mass Society but he describes it (especially its size), in the way that he understand it. There we read: “2. *Statistics. 2.1. The generic City has grown dramatically over the past few decades. Not only has its size increased, its numbers has too. In the early seventies it was inhabited by an average of 2.5 million official (and more or less 500,000 unofficial) residents; now it hovers around the 15 million mark*”. Rem Koolhaas, “The Generic City” in Rem Koolhaas and Bru Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, New York: Taschen, 1995, 1250. Also reference to the multicultural and multiracial character of the Generic City help us to see analogies between the Mass Society, as it is explained in the present thesis and the described Metropolis by Rem Koolhaas (Ibid., 1252).

<sup>87</sup> For the theory of the Mass Society and the procedure of its creation we use the Greek social ontologist and political scientist Panagiotis Kondylis. We will refer analytically to his in the next chapters.

surpass a specific number called “critical mass”. The aforementioned number of members is responsible for imposing the organizational structure and determines its functional rules.

In order to have a better idea of the present situation, it is important to form a historical perspective. In comparison with its previous version (the Bourgeois Society), the present society experiences for first time the procedure of massification. This fact (the massification) is very important in order to understand the organizational structure of the Mass Society (which we will explain in the next chapter). The gathering in the main western cities<sup>88</sup> (the Metropolises) a great number of citizens creates a demand for a greater (related to the previous era) production and a greater consumption. This circular relationship between action and re-action in the society creates a specific (predetermined) form of behavior<sup>89</sup> that implies a specific organizational structure that can facilitate a greater number of links, connections and relationships between its members.

Although some of the changes in the form of the present society was implied by social needs that were not related to the increasing number of the members of the society but were related to the democratization procedures (or better saying demands) that took place in the late Bourgeois Society, a lot of theorists argue that the main causes have numerical background and that the quick increase of the population had accelerated the changes and redefined the procedures. In few words, the quick increase of the population has modified the perspective of the “cosmos” (world) and has changed the structure and the characteristics of our society.

In this point we have to mention that it is very difficult, in the Mass Society, to judge which is the level of the “critical mass” and to verify when a specific mass reaction reflects the believes and the opinions of a large part of our Society (that means to pass the level of the “critical mass”), in order to be socially representative. In order to put it with other words, it is often observed a massive action in the Society (for example a political movement) to have an important impact upon the Public Opinion, considering it as a major action of the Society that represents an important part of it, in order to find out later that it wasn't finally so representative as it was thought previously, exactly because it wasn't so big, as it was thought, in order to pass the level of the “critical mass”. That happens because in our Mass Society it is very difficult to say with accuracy when a social movement is really massive. Our Society is so massive, in other words, that it is very difficult, even for the ones that research the Mass Society to judge when the participants in an action/movement pass the level of the “critical mass”.

### **P.1.2. The Mass Society as a homogenized society where tendencies can be created.**

---

<sup>88</sup> The Mass Society is strongly related to the urban. The Mass society finds its real expression in the contemporary Metropolises and can be perceived only in the content of the last. For the understanding of the Mass Society useful are the urban studies that contain courses in sociology, anthropology, geography, etc

<sup>89</sup> For more on behaviorism, see: Burrhus Frederic Skinner, *Science and human behavior*, New York: Macmillan, 1953. And: Burrhus Frederic Skinner, *About behaviorism*, New York: Vintage, 1974.

Although the Mass Society generates contradiction and diversity all the time, the theories of Behaviorism explain us that the aforementioned diversity (through the mass culture) can be redirected to specific tendencies that homogenize parts of the society and create subgroups of specific behavior, way of living and perceiving the world. The understanding of the Behaviorism's procedure is crucial for the understanding of the Mass Society. The circular procedure starts with the diversity that produces reactions of homogenization inside the Mass Society, which works as a melting pot. This procedure of homogenization causes reactions for new diversities (although in peripheral areas of the Mass Society) that nourish the circular procedure.

The homogenization's procedure, an effect caused by the necessity to belong to a group, leads to our present condition, where the individual can react differently inside a massive group than he might have been reacted if he had conserved his individuality, if he hadn't been incorporated in a massive group. In this point we have to mention that in the Behaviorism's theories the diversity is not melted away. The diversity exists but in an upper level. Actually, the Mass Society is divided in many subgroups that have an internal homogeneity, but at the same time, conserve a diversity vis a vis to the other subgroups. In this level we can identify the co-existing of the homogeneity and the diversity at the same time.

The Behaviorism is not the only factor that contributes to the homogenization procedure. The market and the brands also contribute to that direction. Naomi Klein has analyzed (we will refer further in the next chapters) the brands' content and the brands' strategies in her book "*No Logo*"<sup>90</sup> and had explained that the brands have the tendency to analyze the forms of living and the communication's modes of marginal subgroups in the society in order to use those patterns in their products and their brands' strategy. Well known is the strategy of *coolhunting*<sup>91</sup>, in which the brands collect the opinion of specific groups (like young black or latin people from the poor suburban areas of New York) and incorporate them at their product, estimating that those target groups can lead a tendency in the fashion. With that procedure, the marginal culture is incorporated in the mainstream, since the expensive products are destined to be bought by the middle and the high American society. Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter in their book "*The rebel sell: How the counterculture became consumer culture*"<sup>92</sup> explain that the brands use the content of the counterculture (exactly because, as their book's title says, the rebel sells) and through that procedure the elements of the counterculture enters at the mainstream culture. As a reaction, the counterculture should invents new forms of expression (new counterculture's content) which after a while will be surely incorporated in the mainstream culture through the brands.

In order to go one step forward, the human being conserves his ability to react as an individual, in some cases, and as member of a massive group, in some others. This condition permits him (according to the theory of Panagiotis Kondylis) to participate in specific combinations (relations with other individuals or groups) as an individual and to change those combinations, according to his interests and wills. The comparative analysis of the Behaviorism and the theory of Panagiotis Kondylis permits us to consider the human being (in

---

<sup>90</sup> Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000.

<sup>91</sup> See: Malcolm Gladwell, "The Coolhunt", *The New Yorker*, March 17 (1997), 78-89.

<sup>92</sup> See: Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter, *The rebel sell: How counterculture became consumer culture*, Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006.

our contemporary Mass Society) at the same time, as member of a group and as an individual. With this comparative analysis we can understand that the human being can react (and in reality is reacting) differently according to his needs and that, in the core of his decisions, he conserves his individuality.

To sum up, on the one hand, the human being is part of a group that acts with specific rules, and on the other hand, he maintains his structured personality and perception of life<sup>93</sup>, that means his individuality. These two different forces that drive his decisions, which seem in first glance contradictories, are very important to be understood, because are very crucial in the procedure of the decision making. According to the theory of Behaviorism, the individual borrows a certain protocol of behavior from the group that he belongs at matters that are frequently used in a daily base. The repetition and the custom play important role in the behaviorism. All the decisions that have to do with the need to belong in a group (from the way the individual is dressed, up to the forms of communication) also lead to the adoption of choices predefined by the group. On the contrary, in single decisions (as a response to the challenges that came of the circumstances) the human being maintains its individuality and act with different manners, since there is no protocol for them. Schematically we may say that the behaviorism forms a group protocol with predefined choices and decisions for matters that constitute the character of the group and are frequently met in the group's everyday life. In matters that occur and are unpredictable, the group doesn't have a group protocol for them and, as a result, there arises the individual response.

If there has existed just the one or the other, it would be easier for us to predict which could be the mechanism of the decision making. Now the fact that the two forces coexist (and are activated in different periods) makes the analysis of the procedure more difficult (and surely more interesting) and has an influence (as we will see later) in the formation and the development of the brands. The way that we decide (and the opacity that exists behind that mechanism<sup>94</sup>) obviously plays a critical role in the procedure of the brand's creation, in order the last one to correspond to our "needs" and to be attractive. To make long story short, our decision making mechanism has direct relation with the procedure of the brand's formation, in order the brands to satisfy our needs.

### **P.1.3. The Mass Society as congestion. The contemporary cities.**

It is inevitable to comment on the notion of congestion, when we have to investigate the Mass Society. The notion of congestion does not refer only to materialistic environments (people

---

<sup>93</sup> The coexisting of those two conditions (to belong to a group, acting as a mass, and, at the same time, to conserve in aspects of his life the individuality) is responsible for the contradictory and unstable character of the individual. It is a common place that unpredictable character of the individual is caused to the coexistence of those two conditions.

<sup>94</sup> See the concept of the "emergent strategy" that Henry Mintzberg has developed. That concept has to do with the decision making in the organizations, but it can be applied to the decision mechanism of the individuals. For Henry Mintzberg, the decisions are productis of "emergent strategies" that arise informally cause of the opaque character of the decision mechanism. See: Henry Mintzberg, *The rise and fall of strategic planning: Reconceiving roles for planning, plans, planners*, Toronto: Free Press, 1994.

and products that surround us, between them, the buildings) but also to ideas and concepts. The proximity of the human beings causes proximity or collision of ideas, cultures, perspectives, wills, theories etc. Creates a congestion of human interests and goals. This explosive mixture, first-time seen in our contemporary Mass Society in such extent, is responsible for the hybridization of many things that surround us (among them, our conception of life). The concepts of ambiguity and mutation are characteristic of our society and are related to its massification, its congestive character that creates contradictions and conflicts of ideas. We consider the notion of congestion crucial in order to understand the procedures of the Mass Society and the dynamic character that the last has.

This congestion is seen also in the materialized world, especially in the modern cities (the Metropolises) that concentrate people from different origins and cultures. The congested contemporary city (generic in a lot of its aspects) and its chaotic condition is now the formal expression of the Mass Society, par excellence. The congested cities, the massification in the space in other terms, seem to be the ideal of our society. The size, the extension of the contemporary cities does matter. It symbolizes freedom and opportunities, although many times the reality contradicts this perception. The continuous massification of the society and, especially, of the city leads to new types of coexistence, to a new type of culture. The contemporary Metropolis is converted to Megapolis, inheriting all the characteristics of the first and giving emphasis to those aspects which have to do with the size and the massiveness.

Rem Koolhaas is maybe one of the first influential architects that get interested in the notion of congestion<sup>95</sup> and, more important, with his influence on the architectural community, he had addressed that issue in the architectural and academic agenda. Had made a whole generation of architects to depart its discourse and design from the city, before reaching and solving the smaller scale, the architectural scale. We will not comment in this point about Rem Koolhaas' relationship with the notion of congestion. We have referred already and we will do so in the fifth chapter, where we will research Koolhaas as a case study. We want to refer to the generation of architects, influenced by him, that get interested in the city, the urban life and the activities that take part in it. Exactly because that generation of architects is numerous, had created a "critical mass" in the architectural community and had obliged the architectural discourse to make a swift in the content of its agenda. The city always was important for the architect and it still is. The difference now from then is not quantitative but qualitative. The new discourse for the contemporary city is interested not only in the form of the city and the procedure of its formation, but also (and maybe more) in the activities that take part in it. The new discourse for the city seems to be interested also in the immaterial procedures, all those activities that doesn't change the shape of the city but do change the life in it.

In the above we must add also the impact that it has upon the architectural community the development, the last decades, of a quite new scientific field. The Urban Studies. The Urban Studies have strong bases in Sociology and Geography, but also create connections with important urban activities, such as the Arts and the Urban Culture. They have evolved

---

<sup>95</sup> We will see analytically the notion of congestion and the role that it has at the Koolhaas' thinking at chapter 5.2.3.1. In this moment just to mention the first appearance of that notion at Koolhaas' work, in his first book "*Delirious New York*". See: R. Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, op. cit., 10.



together with the city's evolution and became stronger academically and intellectually as the city started to occupy more and more our attention. Those Studies try to present and explain the contemporary life in the Metropolises or the big cities, focusing basically in the immaterial activities, and one of their research themes is inevitably the congestion. The new architectural agenda had been influenced by the Urban Studies, we have to admit it, not only from their content, but also from their methodology and their research procedures.

#### **P.1.4. The theoretical base of Panagiotis Kondylis. The theory of combinations.**

Every society in the history, each one taking different form and structure, has a specific mechanism that makes the individuals who form it to interact and to be organized in a specific, different in every case, hierarchy. In order to know how each society functions, it is important to have knowledge of its structure and its mechanism. A lot of theoreticians and philosophers<sup>96</sup> have tried to explain the functional way of our Mass Society, incorporating in our theoretical background important contributions that can help us represent better and understand deeper the functionality of our society. Between them, I would like to mention Richard Sennett, who (with his book: "*The Fall of the Public Man*"<sup>97</sup>) has presented different aspects of our mass society and the way that the last has changed the citizens' behavior.

But, in my analysis, I would like to use another theoretician who is less popular in the Western Europe's theoretical environment but I estimate that he is more suitable to explain the bases of the massive structure that takes place in our present globalized society (well-known as Advanced Mass Society). He is the Greek philosopher and social ontologist Panagiotis Kondylis who (with his book: "*The decadence of the Bourgeois Culture, from the Modern to the Postmodern Society and from the Liberalism to the Mass Democracy*"<sup>98</sup>) explains thoroughly the organizational structure (how it functions, in other words). The current text is not the place to explain at length his theoretical approach. It is necessary just to explain the transition for the Bourgeois Society<sup>99</sup> to the present Mass Society<sup>100</sup> and the functional structure of the second.

Using the thinking of Panagiotis Kondylis and his aforementioned book, we can take advantage of a quite thorough description of the way that the bourgeois society had been composed and the equivalent constitution of the contemporary society. Through his reading of

---

<sup>96</sup> For the approach of the Mass Society from the philosopher Hanna Arendt, see: Hanna Arendt, *The Human Condition (Vita Activa)*, Athens: Gnosi Editions, 1986, 63-66. [We use the Greek translation]. The original book was: Hanna Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1958. For the Public Sphere, see chapter 7, with title: "*The Public Sphere: The commons*", *Ibid.*, 75-85.

<sup>97</sup> See: Richard Sennett, *The Fall of the Public Man*, New York: Knopf, 1977.

<sup>98</sup> See: Panagiotis Kondylis, *The decadence of the Bourgeois Culture, from the Modern to the Postmodern Society and from the Liberalism to the Mass Democracy*, Athens: edition Themelio, 2000. [greek text].

<sup>99</sup> For the Bourgeois Society and the role of Liberalism at its formation see: Fernand Braudel, *The Grammar of Civilization*, Athens: editions of the Cultural Foundation of the National Bank, 1993, 452-453. [We use the Greek translation]. The original book was: Fernand Braudel: *Grammaire des civilisations*, Paris: Flammarion, edition Champ, 1993.

<sup>100</sup> For the Mass Society and the role of Capitalism and the free market at its formation see: *Ibid.*, 648-649.

the Bourgeois Society, we can understand it as a harmonic composition of “*substance and consolidated*” parts that is “*based at more-or-less stable relations between the parts and the Whole*”<sup>101</sup>. On the other hand, the contemporary, post-modern society (term that Kondylis uses in order to refer to the Mass Society) is consisted by “*only ultimate constituent elements, that can be detected with the consistent analysis, points or atoms, whose texture and existence is being constituted simply and only by its function, that means by its capability to form endlessly new combinations together with other points or atoms*”<sup>102</sup>.

From the above we can understand that, according to Kondylis’ analysis and thinking, the Bourgeois Society was more hierarchical and solid, with each individual to have a fixed and stable position, in contrary to the current Mass Society, which is more flexible and less hierarchical, with the individuals, name them the citizens, to have theoretically the opportunity to move to another social level and to construct (and dissolve) constantly new connections and relations with other citizens.

Through the analysis of Kondylis we can understand that the shift from the first model<sup>103</sup> to the second has to do with the changes in the organization and in the functionality of the society. From a hierarchic structure we pass to a mutant and flexible structure which permits to the elements of the society (the citizens) to achieve positions that previously were not allowed to have. In this logic, the eternal changing connections, the relationships between the members of the society permit a broader flexibility and theoretically bigger opportunities.

But from the whole theoretical approach of Panagiotis Kondylis, I would like to stress the “*capability to form endlessly new combinations*”. The concept of the eternal changing combinations (based on the “*elements’ function*”) is very well related to the functionality of the present Mass Society. The elements of the Mass Society are free to be combined between themselves, according to their aims. Those combinations of the simple elements construct a meaning, are the ones responsible to create content. On the “*theory of the combinations*” (as Kondylis presents them in his theoretical framework) we will base later (as we will see in a following chapter) the idea of the architectural strategy full of mutable combinations of architectural activities. This combination of architectural activities will widen our notion on the architect’s role in the Mass Society and will expand our perspective to the architectural instruments that an architect can use.

#### **P.1.5. The Mass Society as a society of spectacle and of advertisement.**

At the transition from the Bourgeois to the Mass Society, one quantitative element is obvious and predominant: the drastic increase of the society’s members. The massification of the society leads to new forms of communication and diversion. The information moves through

---

<sup>101</sup> P. Kondylis, *The decadence of the Bourgeois Culture*, op. cit., 63. Translation from Greek into English from the thesis’ author.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>103</sup> The first model has been called by Panagiotis Kondylis “*synthetical-harmonized scheme of thinking*” and represents the Bourgeois Society (*Ibid.*, 63-64) and the second model has been called “*analytical-combinatorial scheme of thinking*” and represents the Mass Society (*Ibid.*, 64-65).

new channels in order to reach the multiple needs of the numerous members of the society. It is obvious that the changes were result of the new condition that predominates over our society. This condition is related to the great number of citizens who decide to live together in new forms of coexistence. In this reality, two things have changed drastically, in comparison to the previous social condition: the advertisement and the spectacle.

The advertisement has appeared dynamically from the time that the society started its massification's processes and a critical mass of ordinary people was available to consume the massive production that the industry has created in series. The consumption is not related only to the increasing needs of the citizens, but is connected also to the way of living. The consumption is a modern way of living, a way to express our social position, our social orientation. A lot of analysis has been made in this level, in order to show that the Mass Society is related directly to consumption and uses the last as an expressive medium.

Besides the massification's processes, one more condition has helped significantly for the development of the advertisement. Is the technology in the communication. The capacity to construct and provide some very powerful means of communication, such as the radio firstly and later the television has helped to spread the message and diffuse the information, creating new desires and new "necessities". The message (the advertisement) can be developed and become more sophisticated, exactly because the medium (radio or television and now the internet) have permitted the quick and massive transmission of knowledge and information. If it was just the massification's process, without the development of the new technologies, surely we would have in front of our eyes a completely different Society.

In this point, it would be useful to make a parenthesis and to refer to something we had mentioned in the previous chapter and it is directly related to the technology. In the thinking of Panagiotis Kondylis and his understanding of the Mass Society we had mentioned the capacity of its members (citizens) to constantly "*form endlessly new combinations*". That means to be free to have new experience, new forms of partnership and new possibilities of developing themselves, through the creation of new connections with other people. This capability (to have the opportunity to form new connections and relations with others) can only be possible through the new advanced technology, something that surely is in the thinking of Panagiotis Kondylis, even though he died earlier, without having the possibility to see and test the advances of the "new" technology.

Coming back to the advertisement<sup>104</sup>, and analyzing its content, we have to mention that it has been formed, created and used exactly in order to facilitate the communication of the new products in a Mass Society which, every day more passive, converts itself to a message receptor. When the brands were consolidated in our Mass Society, the advertisement was the principal medium which transfers the information of the imaginary that the brand creates. As the imaginary is a way of living, a life-style proposed by the brands and purchased by the member of the Mass Society, the advertisement is converted to the diffusion's channel of the aforementioned acquired "*way of living*", the purchased imaginary.

---

<sup>104</sup> About the advertisement in the contemporary Mass Society and in the context of the brands, see the analysis of: M. Chevalier and G. Mazzalovo, *Pro Logo*, op. cit., 221. For the brand's communication in the same context, see: *Ibid.*, 99.

Obviously, without the advertisement and the new technologies we may not have the brands as developed and sophisticated as we know them now. As we will see in the next chapter, the brands create and carry an imaginary (that means a complex system of information), which expresses a way of living and a social status. The individuals acquire the brand's product in order to acquire that way of living and that social status that the brand contains. In other words, the brand carries a message that transfers information to the others of how we want to live and with whom we want to be associated. That message could not be so easily transferred (and therefore would not be the brand as important in the contemporary society as it is now) if the current technology wasn't so advanced in order to be capable to transfer quickly and easily the information (the message) that the brand contains.

Besides of the advertisement, we had refer to the spectacle as the second element that had changed drastically and had characterized the Mass Society. The spectacle is the form of amusement for the contemporary Mass Society. Well analyzed by Guy Debord (in his book: "*The Society of the Spectacle*"<sup>105</sup>), the spectacle<sup>106</sup>, although well-known from the Roman Era, was renewed in the decades of fifties and sixties in order to fit to the present social framework and to the new massive needs. As the communication's processes in the Mass Society dictate and use the same media/channels with the advertisement, the spectacle has a univocal transmitter and plenty of receptors. The contemporary spectacle refers to the masses. Uses the structure and the behavior's forms of the contemporary society in order to express the new conditions and the cohesive mechanisms of the Mass Society. The spectacle does not use the masses only as a receptor. Uses them also as a point of reference, as a theme.

Before moving forward, it is necessary to make one additional comment on the theme of spectacle in order to be better understood its connection with the brand. And this comment should be related to the people who are part of the spectacle. The actors, the celebrities and the athletes (main factors of the contemporary spectacle) are the ones who have been recruited by the brands in order to be the brand's communication vehicle and their fans/followers to be potentially purchasers of the brand's products. It is enough just to mention the case of basketball player Jordan and his role in the evolution of Nike<sup>107</sup> in order to understand how important this coexistence is between the brands and the celebrities and the osmosis that this coexistence creates. We have to pay attention to that, since this is not just advertisement (where the actor simply communicates the message) but it is one step forward. The celebrity is part of the brand, is the heart of the brand.

We had referred above to the Roman Era and the role of the Masses and the Spectacles during that period. It is well known that the Gladiators offered a spectacle (although macabre) to the Masses. I estimate that it is a good example, in order to highlight the differences of the function of the Masses then and now and therefore why we speak about a Mass Society now and not from then and thereafter. The Masses in the Roman Era are not characterized

<sup>105</sup> See: Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, New York: Zone Books, 1995.

<sup>106</sup> The spectacle has been analyzed from the point of view of the architect and the urban thinker by Rem Koolhaas in his book: "*Delirious New York*", at the chapter: "Coney Island: The technology of the Fantastic". See: R. Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, op. cit., 29-79.

<sup>107</sup> See the analysis for the role of the celebrities at the Nike's advertisement strategy: Jutiki T. Gunter and Jeffrey Inaba, "Nikevolution" in Chuihua Judy Chunget al. (eds), *The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping / Harvard Design School Project on the City 2*, New York: Taschen, 2002, 543-557.

(according to our point of view) as such because of their multitude, their big numbers. They are characterized as such because of the fact that they were behaving according to the Behavioral rules<sup>108</sup> that we had analyzed in the chapter P.1.1. When they do not preserve their individuality (and the way they used to react to the circumstances) and become a Mass, an unformed structure; then that Mass behaves differently, because of the strong (although casual) internal relationship of its members. The important is the psychological mechanism (that made them perform differently when they became a Mass contrary to how they were acting individually) and not the quantitative characteristic of the multitude.

On the contrary, in the contemporary Mass Society, important is the quantitative factor. Of course still exists the Behavioral Mechanism that we had mentioned before, it will always exist, but it is not the main reason for using this term. The word “Mass” in this case is related to the numbers, to the quantitative factor. The important in the Mass Society (and for that reason it is characterizes as massive) is the possibility for endless massive connections between its members. Therefore, for other reasons we speak about masses in the Roman Era and different thing we mean when we speak about Masses in the contemporary era.

In this chapter we had tried to present and explain the reasons why is essential to understand the critical role of the advertisement and the spectacle inside our contemporary society and how they create the communication patterns and structure the communication channels of our society, of the masses. To make long story short, the advertisement and the spectacle are two forms of our society to transfer and deliver various messages, some of them, the ones of the brands. Therefore, in order to understand the Mass Society and the role of the brands inside it, it is important to highlight the crucial role of those two factors in the Society.

---

<sup>108</sup> The Behaviorism (to which we have referred already) is a theory that describes the behavior of the individual in the Mass Society. It describes a contemporary phenomenon. We use the term to explain the behavior of the Roman citizens in the Roman Era, although it may seem strange as a methodological decision, because we believe that it can interpret the condition.

### 3. The brand's strategy in architecture.

As we have mentioned in the introduction, the present thesis uses as research tool the brand's theory and the structure/organization of the brands, believing that this may help us to understand how some architectural offices work and act. We have mentioned already that this thesis doesn't believe that the architectural offices are brands by excellence, that means have used those strategies fully as the efficient brands do in the corporate world. They are more amateur brands, using some of the techniques, when they estimate that this may help them. Maybe this happens because most of the architects believe that their profession is (to a great extend) quite artistic, and for that reason a more professional implementation of the brand's methods and techniques would be useless.

Although that is the main opinion in the profession, the bigger offices do have elaborated a more efficient brand's strategy and they have applied it with bigger or smaller success. Maybe because they feel that they have to compete with other brands (and outside the architectural community) which do have a brand's methodology and organization. In any case, some of the brands' strategies are visible in architecture and in the architectural offices' function that have more efficient presence in the architectural community. For that reason we propose to analyze them through this point of view. In order to have more specific results in our research and to be able to compare the architectural brands' strategies with the other brands' strategies, it is necessary first to have an idea of how the real brands work and which are the main points of the brand's theory/methodology.

This third chapter (as the previous one) is organized in two parts. The first contains the main necessary information for the brands and basically focuses on the architectural brands and its content. The second part (named *parallel reading*) has texts that intends to focus on different arguments mentioned in the first part, where we didn't have the space to comment extensively without losing its internal cohesion. Those texts in the second part are very important for the understanding of the whole thesis but are working structurally as annexes to the main subchapters.

#### 3.1. The interrelations of brands with the Mass Society.

In the contemporary Mass Society the economic factor has an important role especially after the predominance of capitalism as a method to structure the economic activity in a global level. Even in a period of a severe crisis, as the one we live now in Europe, the economic factor is crucial for the everyday life. Is (maybe more than in the past) in the everyday conversations of the ordinary citizen.

The correlation of the Mass Society with the economic activity (although complicated) in the daily life can be explained better through the brand's theory that means the theory which

explains the strategy that a corporation applies in order to dispose and sell its production. The methods (in other words the strategies) that the brands use in order to promote their products and to capture a part of the market will be presented in next chapters (P.2.1. – P.2.3). Already, in the chapter 2.5 we have discussed the role of the brand's imaginary, in order to get connected with the user/purchaser. In this introductory paragraph we will like more to explain the connections, the interrelations between the brands and the Mass Society, in order to be easier the transition to the analysis of the architectural brands, or, in order to say the same in other way, the influence of the brand's strategies on architectural practice.

The brands could not have been existed without the Mass Society. The brands are the products of the corporations that have been created after the industrial revolution. When the production (in series) has been massively produced and a big quantity of products has been stocked in the corporations' warehouses, a mechanism to diffuse those products was needed. The brand is a construction of an image which is associated with the product and gives to it character and an added value. The added value is provided through the projection of a certain image, *an imaginary*, to the consumers who purchase the specific product. So the consumer instead of purchasing a product, for example a fragrance, in order to use it as a simple consumable object, acquires now additionally the imaginary that the fragrance's brand had constructed and accompanies the product as a surplus value. But this imaginary (the surplus value) could not have been created without the mechanism of diffusion and the channels of communication that only the Mass Society disposes.

A brand's strategy needs to distribute a big quantity of products (manufactured in mass production) to an equally big number of consumers and to reach them through complicated and diverse channels of communication which will carry a complicated advertisement's strategy. It is obvious that those parameters can be found only in the contemporary society and cannot be encountered in the previous Bourgeois Society. In this situation we have to add the fact that the consumer – member of the community – only in the contemporary Mass Society had succeeded to reach the necessary economic level in order to purchase these types of products.

From the above we can understand why the brand's strategies has been developed so much this period of the history and why it is so interconnected with Mass Society. That happens because the Mass Society has, on the one hand, the massiveness that the brands' production needs (we refer to the citizens that will acquire the brands' production) and, on the other hand, has the technology, the techniques and methodology for the diffusion of the brands' imaginary (advertisement, spectacle). The (flexible) structure of the Mass Society (as we had seen it in the P.1.4 chapter and the theoretical approach of Panagiotis Kondylis) do play also a key role in the evolution of the brands. In a Society that it is structured in order to favor the "*capacity (of the citizens) to form endlessly new combinations*" (or connections we may add) with other citizens and common actions between them, we may expect that the citizens would like to incorporate at their identity fragments (parts) of the identity of the other, in order to make more efficient the connection with him. And the brand, as a vehicle of the imaginary (component of the identity) may be the easier way to achieve that. Furthermore, the flexibility of the brand's structure is a factor that explains quite well how it had managed to dominate in the current flexible society.

### 3.2. The Brands in architecture.

In the previous chapter (and in the chapters P.2.1. – P.2.3.) we presented and explained the framework of the brands, their role in the Mass Society and the content of the brand's theory that gives the instruments with which particular brand's strategies can be constructed. In this chapter we will like to investigate how the brand's theory can be applied to architecture and to research the influence that this application may have on the architectural projects, the way with which architecture is designed and created.

As we had mentioned previously the brand is fruit of the Mass Society par excellence, because it reflexes all the characteristics of the present society and uses efficiently its communication's channels. As product of the Mass Society, we can find applications of the brand's theory in the different expressions of the human activities, from politics to sports and from culture to economy. What the brand does is to create, on the base of a materialistic product a *cultural construction*, which is exactly the added value that the consumer purchases. This cultural construction (obvious created by the brands, through diverse brand's strategies) is *the imaginary*. Consequently, in the present extremely antagonistic and mutant environment the imaginary is the one that makes the branded product more resistant and creates loyalty among the consumers. The bottom line is that the consumer purchases the product in order to consume the imaginary that this represents and not so much for the product as such.

This reality has been projected to architecture. The product of the architectural design, the building (or in the case of the urban design, the urban space) always was capable to contain cultural significance, so it is easier to apply the imaginary's framework to it. What differentiates the branded architecture from the architecture as service is that, in the first case, the cultural content that accompanies the building/product is more coherent, more constituent and more structural. With other words, the imaginary is the conceptual base onto which the architectural project has been developed, is the principal message that the building emits.

Although the brand's strategy, applied in architecture, has been related by the majority of the analysts to the big architectural offices, the "star architects", the reality is that it can be applied (and it is) in all scales of the architectural offices. As exists in the market, with different sizes of brands, the same we can recognize in the architectural community, where the brand's theory can be applied to small, medium and large architectural offices, with local, national and international range. The implementation of the brand's strategy in the architectural design has, besides others, two consequences: 1) the applied concept provides the building with various readings, although the predominant impression is concrete and precise. Is the concept which generates the architectural project, and at the same time, the message that it emits. 2) The applied concept is always inside the conceptual framework (or in other words, the imaginary) of the brand architectural office. That means that there is a coherent connection between the imaginary of the architectural office and the concept applied to each



of its architectural projects. This strategy permits to the architectural office to have a coherent production and to emit a concrete image.

In architecture does not exist the mass production that we see in the market, where the brands give a specific imaginary to the whole mass production and the various consumers purchase the same product in order to adopt the same imaginary. So, in architecture the application of the brand's theory is slightly different. The cities, the corporations or the cultural entities (for example, a museum) contract the brand architectural offices with the intention to purchase an architectural project that, although it will be different from the past production of the same office, it will contain the imaginary that characterizes that architectural brand. This imaginary can be in the formalist architecture (for example of the architectural offices of Ghery, Morphosis or Hadid), where the form is predominant and interrelates the office's various architectural projects, or in the conceptual architecture (for example of the architectural offices of MVRDV or Koolhaas), where the same attitude towards the city and the society is present in their various architectural projects.

In this point we have to mention that (as again happens in the market) do not all the architectural offices apply the brand's strategy. The majority prefers to provide services and to unleash its production from any coherent logic. In this occasion their competitiveness lays on the standardization of the provided services, the competitive price, the provided precision, their organizational structure and their efficient communication policies. This lack of brand's strategy does not obstruct their success. On the contrary, we can mention various quite successful. It is just another way of participation in the architectural profession. The motivation to investigate the implementation of the brand's theory to architecture is based on the fact that the brand's strategy is related directly to the contemporary Mass Society and can be applied also to other forms of human activities that influence the architectural production (as it is the politics). The compatibility of the architectural brand's strategy with the way that the other fields of the human activityfunction is its main advantage.

For that reason we use the notion of brand with a more strict significance, on the contrary to what the majority has in mind when uses this term. For example, the architectural community may consider all the "star-architects" as brands, exactly because they understand as brand whatever is well-known and famous. In the architects' (and not only) mind, there is an association between whatever is broader known and the brand, since the brand works with the communication and the media. But that it is not true. The brand, besides of the use of the communication's media, has a specific structure and content. Do not all the well-known architectural offices are brands. For example, the thesis considers the offices of Richard Rogers and Norman Foster (just to name two) as offices which work more with the services' strategy (or at least use a mixed strategy with strong presence of the services' method) and not as architectural brands. Since they do not have as a principle aim the construction of a coherent and stable imaginary that connects transversely and characterizes all their projects and instead they prefer to be competitive based on service's strategies, as it is the competitive price, the (time and economic) precision and the well-functioned organizational structure.

Another advantage is that the brand's strategy can be a vehicle, a tool for expansion. It is estimated that, in order to grow in size (and to be operational in that situation), it is necessary to adopt a unique strategy that can make coherent the imaginary, the product's content and the broader conceptual framework of the company. That unique strategy is the brand's strategy that can affect vertically the company, its operational structure and the image that it emits. In order to be more specific, let bring in mind a big architectural office. Since in one year they work in dozens of commissions and a big number of competitions, and a lot of architects are involved in those projects, it is inevitable that the principal architect and his associates will not manage to preserve a common architectural content and an architectural language that can interrelate those projects and make a coherent total. As the office become bigger, more diverse and unconnected becomes its production. In order to maintain homogeneity and continuity between its projects, specific principles and standards should be given, as well as a common approach towards architecture and the society should be established. The last one may be the imaginary, which in its DNA contains information of the design procedures, the used concepts, the forms that are reproduced. The imaginary is the brand's specific element that can unify the diversity of its production, since it is the one which gives identity to the production and to the office. For that reason we say that the brand's strategy may be a tool of expansion. Imposing a specific, elaborated imaginary on the production, it can be achieved a bigger production maintaining the necessary coherence and the diffusion of a common message.

In order to go back to architecture, practically a large number of the big architectural offices has been converted into a brand, in order to be more competitive in a global level and the medium and smaller architectural groups (for example, in local level) use the brand's techniques, in order to ascend (in competitive terms) and to grow in size. It is important to underline, therefore, that the brand's strategies hasn't been used solely by the big architectural offices, but are strategies that have been used and can be used by the architectural offices of all scales. And that because the brand's strategy is not associated with specific corporate scale but with an approach to the organization's structure. In other words, the brand's strategy is related to the way that the corporation (an architectural office in our case) wants to be seen and conceived by their customers and the society in general.

In parallel, a characteristic of the brand's strategy is that permits to the brands to compete with other brands from other sectors. A cultural brand can compete with a sport brand etc. [A contemporary example from Spain is the company Renfe (the company that operates the Spanish trains) which due to its fast AVE trains can compete with the airlines companies, like Iberia, in the transportation of passenger from Barcelona to Madrid and visversa]. This brand's strategy can be extremely useful in the competition of the architectural community with other professional groups that operate in the construction sector. An architectural brand assumes more competences and is converted into a stronger entity, which (through the added value that it produces) can participate in the interprofessional competition from a vantage point.

If in the broader market, the consumer of the branded products is the member of the Mass Society who wants to augment his self-esteem, purchasing the aforementioned branded products and adopting its imaginary; in the construction field, the consumer of the

architectural projects (created by architectural brands) are the promoters (public entities or private), who want, through the architectural project, to express their economical or cultural position and to project their ambition to the world. The architectural brands do not provide services, instead they produce a cultural construction (the architectural imaginary) that can be acquired by the promoters' entity (public or private). Inside the architectural brand's strategy, the architect creates the image that the promoter will project to the world.

In this direction, interesting is the comment of Rem Koolhaas in "*the Generic City*" that makes the same argument, even for a field (as it is the infrastructure) where we might expect that there is nothing significant as added value, besides of its functional role. In the abovementioned text Koolhaas writes: "*Infrastructure is no longer a more or less delayed response to a more or less urgent need but a strategic weapon, a prediction: Harbor X is not enlarged to serve a hinterland of frantic consumers but to kill/reduce the chances that harbor Y will survive the 21<sup>st</sup> century. On a single island, southern metropolis Z, still in its infancy, is 'given' a new subway system to make established metropolis W in the north look clumsy, congested, and ancient. Life in V is smoothed to make life in U eventually unbearable*"<sup>109</sup>. Although we speak about infrastructure, which main utility is its function, we see that can be part of a broader strategy. It can have a strong significance. We can speak about an added value in the infrastructure, a strategic utility that it may have in the broader competition between the Metropolises or the different Territories. We can imagine how dynamic may become the architecture if it incorporates in its qualities the added value of the imaginary, since architecture has a strong cultural content.

In the expansive strategy<sup>110</sup> helpful can be the brand's methodology. And that, because the creation of the brand can be a vehicle for competing with other professional groups (in the direction that we have explained in the chapter 2.3). The characteristic of the brand, that gives emphasis to the construction of an imaginary (an identity, in other words), that can be applied easily in various situations, can be the tool for the invasion of the architectural brands in other professional fields. A simple paradigm is the design by Zaha Hadid faucets and other household commodities. This can be possible, since Zaha Hadid architectural firm is a brand with a strong formalist approach that gives a strong and quick impression to the observers. As the architectural form of Zaha Hadid is recognized and respectful by the society, the use of the same form, from the field of the architecture to the field of product design can generate new demand in the new field (of the product design) and the entrance of the architect as a designer in that distinctive professional discipline.

We have mentioned that the brand can be the vehicle for the expansion of our profession, using the argument that a well-constructed brand (with a defined imaginary and identity) can

<sup>109</sup> See: Rem Koolhaas and Bru Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, New York: Taschen, 1995, 1264.

<sup>110</sup> The examples can be many and we can see them in our everyday life. The Disney from the animations (where it had begun professionally) has expanded in the area of the recreation (Desneyland) or even the construction field (the city Celebration in Florida). The Virgin Company has a variety of activities, from the music industry and the airplane transportation to the health clubs, the publishing enterprises and the alcoholic drinks. All the above can be possible cause of the ability of the brand to create an imaginary (an identity) that the same can be applied in a variety of activities or products. As we have said before, a well-defined brand can be the vehicle for the expansion to other professional or business activities.

be applied in different design fields or professional activities. The same argument can be used regarding the specialization<sup>111</sup> dilemma (see *chapter 2.4*), showing that the brand is a construction in order to apply the same design approach to different fields of architecture. De facto the brand's strategy is favoring the generalist approach of architecture, since the brand itself is a generalist approach of life. The brand architect cannot be anything else than a generalist architect. The brand architectural offices may have special interests (for example, the influence of the congestion or the urban life in the design for Rem Koolhaas, or the ecological and energy-saving dimension of architecture for Enric Ruiz Geli) but not a specialization, which is something completely different. Having in mind the above, we can say that the architectural brand is the evolution of the generalist architect.

The Mass Society has generated also a massive architectural community. In the developed western world, it is a common place that the architectural community is extensive. The big number of architects has made a mass community inside the Mass Society that behaves with the same way. Needs to consume information, to amplify knowledges, to communicate. For that reason this huge quantity of books, conferences, postgraduate programs, exhibitions. The diffusion of the information and the architectural products (books, lectures, educational programs etc, made by architects for the architects) follows the diffusion's theory that we will analyze in the chapter P.2.4. There exists "*opinion leaders*" and "*innovators*" that has been involved in the development of the architectural community. But there are also "*meta-architects*"<sup>112</sup>, that means architectural professionals, whose production is destined to the colleague architects.

Normally, several brand architects play the role of the meta-architects and the opinion leader and direct part of their production towards the architectural community that has been converted recently into a quite big market. Obviously when Rem Koolhaas, in order to give an example, wrote his books "*SMLXL*" and "*Content*" or gives lectures, had and has in his mind as a public, towards to which he refers, the architectural community. The concern of the brand architects (of various magnitudes and range) for their position in the architectural community is not a parallel work which aims to create and maintain their fame inside the architectural community or to earn additional income. It is not an action of vanity.

It is part of the brand's strategy that they create in order to make their brand architectural offices more competitive. And that because the limits of the architectural community with the rest of the Mass Society is not fixed. There is an osmotic phenomenon between our architectural community and the Mass Society, a lot of non-architects are interested in architecture and the architects (that in their majority consume the meta-architect's production)

---

<sup>111</sup> The specialization is a method used to increase the competitiveness of the organizations. The same happens in architecture. Most of the time it is associated with the services' strategy, though that, through the specialization, more knowledge is created around a specific subject and for that reason more abilities are developed in order to maximize the efficiency and the productivity. Although the specialization is more near to the services' strategy, we cannot classify it exclusively in that category. And that, because it could be associated with the brand strategy too. For example, an architectural office that elaborates an imaginary related to the ecology and the environmental friendly policies and uses the bioclimatic design as design framework. It has as specialization the bioclimatic design but it uses it for the development of a brand, with the methodology for a brand.

<sup>112</sup> We will refer more analytically to the "*meta-architects*" in chapter 4.

behave as opinion makers of the local, national and international society. The architects form an impression of what it is innovative, advanced, contemporary and adequate and transfer this impression to the local, national and international society where they belong.

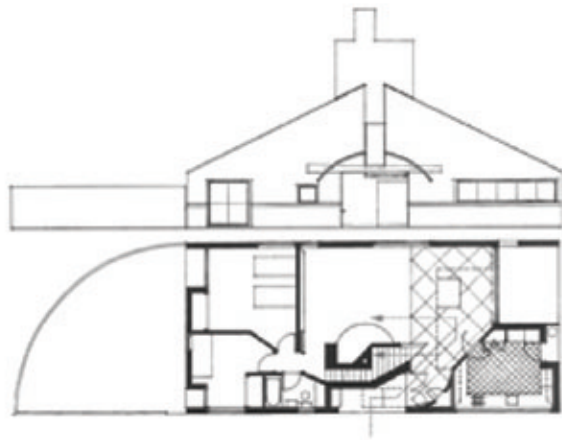
Partially, the success of a brand architect passes through the opinion that create their fellow architects. There are a lot of architects (for example Josep Bohigas in a radio conversation published by the architectural site SCALAE) who have mentioned that in big part of their works had access through other architects. Or directly or indirectly. Again with that (the indirect form of access), I refer to the diffusion's theory which we will analyze extensively in the P.2.4. chapter. This reality, of course, doesn't mean that the brand architects should not make additionally an effort to penetrate into other professional communities and the broader Mass Society with other diffusion's techniques. They are two parallel strategies that should be combined.

### **3.3. From the Modern to the contemporary architecture. From the architectural product (as service) to the architectural imaginary.**

The architectural design had different framework and references during the history of Architecture and obviously that fact had its consequences in the content of the architectural projects. With this chapter we will like to show the mutant character of the architectural design and how it was formed according to the social conditions that defined each period. The thesis estimates that the architectural project from the Modern to the contemporary architecture has passed through 3 different conditions. From the architectural project as product (or as service) we pass through the architectural project as object in order to reach our contemporary period where the architectural projects are defined by the imaginary.

In the Modern period the architectural projects have the characteristics of a product. This product has mainly a functional character and principle of the Architecture was to serve the society (after two destructive World Wars) and help her to recover and to rebuild her social structures. We remember the Modern idea of Architecture as a Machine, which has clear functional characteristics. This concept passes also to the principle "form follows function" where again the importance is given to the functional ability of Modern Architecture. The Architecture was the tool in order to be applied the principles of the healthy conditions of life, the democratization of the society through the distribution of the industrialized products, the implementation of the equality through the social housing etc. The character of the architectural design as medium to serve the society was so strong that specific period that gave to the architect a very social and participatory profile.

In the brief postmodern period the architectural project acquired the symbolic dimensions of an icon (with references to the past). The postmodern building was a singular piece that expressed the rupture with the modern forms and its social character. The building as icon has a strong eclectic appearance and was supercharged by symbolic and semiotic notions and meanings. The complexity that characterized the postmodern thinking was also reflected to the architectural projects and gave them a singular formation. The importance was



*R. Venturi, Vanna Venturi House*



concentrated at the façade, which has the objective to attract the eye. The plan passes in a second level of importance.

The contemporary architectural project, more related to the Mass Society, as we have presented previously, contains a close relationship with the imaginary, a cultural construction which aim has to give an added value to the functional character of each architectural realization. In our contemporary period of the image and the message/slogan, the architectural project combines the functional needs with the creation of an imaginary that can send out information and a compound meaning.

In this point we have to make a comment related to the fact that in the last decades, (before the crises of the 2008), when the blissfulness and the display of wealth and power was part of the architectural design; architecture, although created by brand architects and was strongly conditioned by the architectural imaginary, has the characteristic of an object. It is true that the architecture of that period has iconic characteristics, trying to attract the attention of the media and of the society. The tool for that intention was the image, which was considered extremely powerful (even more powerful than it really is). The above assessment is true but may lead to a misunderstanding. That the iconic architecture made by the brand architects (in the current period) has common characteristics with the architecture of the Post-Modern period: the characteristics of the iconic architecture.

According to the present thesis, we should speak about two different types of iconic architecture, which we should not confuse. The one of the postmodern architecture which principle aim was to break its relationship with the (boring) functionality of the modernism and give meaning to architecture through the references to historic periods of the past; and the one of the contemporary Mass Society, when the architecture acquires sometimes characteristics of object. The importance is in the object itself. It doesn't make any references to the past (not even to the future). It wants simply (superciliously and narcissistically) to show how beautiful or dynamic it is.

We hope that the reader will pay attention to the word "*sometimes*" in the aforementioned phrase "*when the architecture acquires sometimes characteristics of object*". It is true that we had plentiful manifestations of iconic architecture (even architecture as object) the last two decades, but the branded architecture is not always related to the iconic. We reach this misunderstanding since we use the word "imaginary" which is obviously associated to the "image" and the "icon". But the imaginary does not imply an excess in the elaboration of the form. We will see, for example, the cases of the conceptual architecture, where does exist strong imaginary, which is not related to a specific form but to a strong concept that characterizes the architecture.

### **3.4. The role of the imaginary and its relationship with the brand's product.**

In the 3.1. chapter we had referred briefly to the symbolic character of the imaginary. Here we will concentrate on the role that it has in the purchasing procedure. The imaginary works as a

constructed image. It compacts a series of notions, meanings and conditions with aim to create a specific concept full of sense. This concept or way of living is the added value of the brand and is what primarily intrigues the consumer to buy the brand's product. For example the products of Nike transmit the notion of "doing urban sports and enjoying your life in the contemporary cities". The product of Tommy Hilfiger transmits "informality, energy and youth". The Kelvin Klein's products transmit "abstraction, transparency and ambiguity" etc. With this method a brand constructs a single imaginary that can be applied to a series of different products under the umbrella of the same brand.

In our contemporary Mass Society the citizen-consumer communicates his way of life and his character through the products that he purchases. The mechanism of this form of communication is simple: The brand's products have acquired an imaginary (created obviously by the brand) which accompanies it in the different stages of the purchasing process. The use of those products permits to the consumer to imagine that he has the same type of life with the proposed (by the brand) life-style. And more than that, to communicate that the life-style created by the brand is the one adopted by him. The use of an acquired way of living permits to the consumer to participate in different communities who have the same adopted life-style. So, the contemporary member of the Mass Society, instead of creating and living his own way of life, consumes a product in order to acquire a false life-style, which can serve as a medium for communication and participation in the society. If in the Bourgeois Society the use of a product (for example a dress) communicated a status, in the contemporary Mass Society, the consumption of a product communicates an identity. From the time that the brands were consolidated in the market we can observe a change in the Mass Society. For first time the consumer is identified as a member of the community. To consume means to participate...

Obviously, the brand, in order to succeed in the promotion of its constructed imaginary, should create a strategy which will connect the physical product with the equivalent imaginary. Although this procedure uses principally as medium the different communication channels (formal or informal), basically this connection has been implied through a sophisticated and complex strategy of combined actions and activities. For example, Nike in order to imply the imaginary of "being healthy and at the same time trendy when you are doing urban sports", it is sponsoring and promoting different sports activities like basketball games in the degraded suburbs. This strategy is very near to the concept of combinations which we have analyzed in the chapter P.1.4. and connects the brands with the content of the Mass Society. In the next chapters, where we will investigate the concept of the brands in architecture, we will refer again to the combinations' strategy, using that time examples from the field of architecture.

### **3.5. The architectural strategies as combination of different architectural actions.**

As we have seen in the 3.1. chapter (explaining the functional structure of the brand's strategy) we understood that the brands, in order to create and diffuse their imaginary, use a complex strategy that involves a combination of actions. The notion of the combination is



*J. Nouvel, Agbar Headquarters in Barcelona*



coming also from the analysis of the Mass Society, made by the philosopher Panagiotis Kondylis, who gave emphasis to the significant role of the social elements and how the ephemeral relationships (combinations) that they develop construct a meaning and a base for action.

In the next chapters we will investigate the importance of the different architectural activities in the definition of the new role of the architect as a professional in the society and how a combination of them makes his position in the professional field stronger, more functional and more substantial. We will see how the different architectural activities have been incorporated in the imaginary that the architectural brands create and how those activities constitute the basic elements of the architectural strategies.

### **3.5.1. The ingredients. Analysis of the different architectural actions (exhibitions, publications, educational activities etc), in relationship to the architectural projects.**

As we have mentioned, the architectural activities cannot be conceived independently, but only as a system, where each activity participates in the success of the other. The architectural activities, as we will see below, are ways of participation in the architectural community and are directly related to the architectural design. As the architecture (a point of reference for all the activities) has been expressed principally through the architectural projects and, additionally, as in our Mass Society the main medium of communication is the image, it is obvious that the center of convergence is the architectural project. The combination of those activities underlines the content of the current architectural condition and can be the base for the creation of the architectural imaginary, the tool for the construction of the architectural brands. The catalogue of the possible architectural activities is so big that there is no use to try to incorporate all of them. Furthermore, in the current period we observe a tendency for hybridization of the forms of the architectural expression and action, which causes a quantitative increase of the observed architectural actions and as a consequence, makes the definition of the architectural activities a difficult task.

One activity that extends its field is the publication of architectural books. It is the basic instrument for the diffusion of ideas and architectural projects and is characterized by a complete diversity. The architectural books are usually a recycling of other architectural activities, as they are the postgraduate programs, the lectures, the exhibitions etc. They refer basically to the architectural community, although some of them achieve to influence near professional fields.

The postgraduate architectural programs and some shorter versions, as are the workshops, are used frequently to explore new fields of architectural influences, in which is not interested now the construction sector but have a potential in the future. In the postgraduate programs and especially in the workshops (which have more professional profile) can be applied new exploration's techniques and new methods can emerge for the architecture research. To this kind of architectural activities are more connected the architectural projects that have a utopian and experimental character and do not aim to be applied directly.

The architectural lectures are one of the most important forms to transmit ideas and new concepts. Because of the fact that they are normally well-prepared and contains architectural projects in order to explain better their ideas, can be an important source for the researchers in the analysis of an architectural brand. Characteristic examples are the Rem Koolhaas' lectures, which indeed are the best sources for the analysis of his working methods.

The architectural exhibitions nowadays are more formal expression of the architectural presence and aim to present constructed architectural project or the ones that have closed their cycle (except if the exhibition is a result of a workshop or an educational program, so its content is related to its investigation).

One of the most interesting forms for diffusing architecture is the architectural magazines. Cause to their periodical frequency (most of them every one or two months), the architectural magazines are capable to express the ephemeral dimension of architecture and a comparative presentation of architectural projects that had participated in an architectural competition. This facilitates an attentive researcher to compare the strategies of the brand architectural offices and the methods that they use. Because of their (bi)monthly edition, the interested researcher in the analysis of the architectural brands can find a group of architectural projects created by the same architectural brand in a short term, thing that allows the researcher to compare those architectural projects and to discover the applied strategy for the construction of the brand's imaginary. This type of architectural magazines permits a connection with the international architectural community, although presents also the local and national architectural scene, thing that allows the interconnection and the comparison of the local with the global architectural environment.

Finally, the architectural conferences and symposia, although in the majority of the cases are characterized by formality and official spirit, can under conditions facilitate the transmission of ideas and the creation of a community with similar interests. Contemporary attempts (like Archilab, for example) have tried to replace previous forms of ideological coexistence in architecture, as it was the CIAM in the modern movement. The interest in those attempts is that the participants use their architectural projects as medium to express their architectural ideas.

### **3.5.2. The mechanism of combining architectural activities and agents.**

The reality in the architectural community has shown that the final outcome of the combination and the coexistence of various architectural activities (and agents) is major than adding each one separately. That has to do with the added value that the procedure of combinations offers. With the term "combinations of architectural activities" we mean the organization of a coherent plan where various (diverse) architectural events will be incorporated in order to achieve a specific predetermined aim. Normally this aim is the creation of a new message and its diffusion. In this message it can be incorporated an architectural project or an architectural strategy and it is normally coordinated by an architectural brand (office or educational center).

In order to explain better this term, which we think it is very crucial for understanding which is the way that the contemporary architectural community functions, we will present an example. In 1999 takes place in Barcelona a workshop created by MVRDV with the title: "Costa Iberica". It is organized in the framework of the educational course of a private architectural faculty with base in Barcelona, the faculty of Universidad Internacional de Catalunya. The preparation of this workshop was made by the office of MVRDV and the students of the aforementioned architectural faculty had worked afterwards, in collaboration with some local architects, in the field of "data mining", with other words, the collection of information for the analysis of the touristic phenomenon in Spain. During that workshop a series of lectures were made in order to be strengthened the informational base of the workshop.

Leader of this workshop was the principal of the MVRDV office, Winy Mass, one of the most popular opinion leaders (at least the period of that workshop) in Europe. The information collected by this workshop was elaborated later by the MVRDV office and on that base several urban and architectural projects (related to the Spanish Mediterranean coast, the touristic phenomenon and the spatial consequences that this development can have at the Spanish coast and the environment) were made. The final result was published in a book<sup>113</sup> with the same name, edited by Actar editions, one of the leading editors on architecture and graphic design and was exposed in an exhibition. The same project was later incorporated to another book of the MVRDV office with the title: "*KM3: Excursion on capacities*"<sup>114</sup>.

Aim of those events was the implication of the MVRDV office to the Spanish reality and the possible pursuance of an architectural commission in Spain. And additionally, complementary aim was the promotion of the MVRDV's activities and their special interests. The election of the subject obviously was well defined though tourism is the Spanish economical engine and to this sector a lot of constructions have been related. In this architectural series of events how many architectural activities and agents have been involved? An international architectural office, an architectural faculty, an international opinion leader, local architects, architectural students, a workshop, some lectures, several architectural projects, an exhibition, two books and an editor.

The undeclared aim was the professional penetration of an architectural brand in the construction sector of Spain, but as a secondary target we can specify the intention for a communication's impact and the consolidation of that architectural brand in the alternative architectural research. We estimate that from the previous example it is shown how a series of architectural activities and events, well-organized, can have a specific aim, but also (independently of the achievement or not of that aim) can have a communication's effect that creates an image for that brand and provides some elements of its brand's imaginary. Obviously, these types of architectural combinations assist in the reinvigoration of the architectural office's image.

---

<sup>113</sup> See: Mathurin Hardel et al. (eds.), *Costa ibérica: upbeat to the leisure city*, Barcelona: Actar editions, 2000.

<sup>114</sup> See: MVRDV, *KM3: Excursion on capacities*, Barcelona: Actar editions, 2005.

## In parallel: (parallel reading 2)

### P.2.1. Introduction to the brand's theory. The book "*No Logo*" of Naomi Klein.

In order to explain the way that the brands function, it is necessary to refer to the previous condition. The product (or the offered service) is searched to be competitive (in order to be purchased) on the level of the price. A cheaper product was the aim and on that theme was focused all the production and advertisement strategies. With the implementation of the brand's theory from the contemporary corporations, a shift of the interest has been made to the selling strategies. The competitiveness is not applied to the price but to the imaginary. The imaginary is a constructed image, a way of living, a way of being and seeing the world that has been applied as an added value to the offered product. The imaginary (although it is diffused by the channels of communication and the advertisement) it is not created at the advertisement department but from the beginning, at the phase of the conception. So, the imaginary is not applied afterwards to the already manufactured product, but it is created in advanced, before the production, in order to condition the material characteristics of the product. This procedure has led to the maxim that: "you can have a brand without product, but you cannot have a brand without an imaginary".

The imaginary has a symbolic character. It is acquired by the consumer purchasing the specific product and it is used in order to express a specific status, life-style, economical condition. Obviously, all the above characteristics are related directly to the constructed by the brands' imaginary. This symbolic character of the imaginary that implies concrete information to the members of the society, can be very important in the analysis of the sociological background of our capitalistic society. The codification and decodification of the imaginary is an essential procedure for the communication of a brand. The decodification of the imaginary is an everyday practice in the market when a consumer decides to purchase or not a product.

The brand's imaginary should be coherent. Exactly because is the attractive point, the symbolic vehicle of the product, it cannot be changed easily and in any case should be well thought. As the construction of an imaginary is a complicated and difficult procedure, in the same way the deconstruction or the changing of the brand's imaginary can be dangerous and with unwanted results. I use the term "construction" because the creation of a brand's imaginary is a procedure that has a lot to do with the construction. It is necessary the field to be well investigated and the aim to be, in advanced, clear and specific. The ambiguity only confusion can create and the contradiction in the symbolic level can cancel the vantage point of the brand.

An important book for understanding the brand strategies is "*No Logo*"<sup>115</sup> of Naomi Klein. Naomi Klein is a critical observer of the contemporary globalized society and with the aforementioned book has analyzed big part of the brand's theory, always with a critical view,

---

<sup>115</sup> See: Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000.

which can help us to bring out the key points of that theory. This book has reflected strongly on the relationship of the brand's imaginary with the advertisement procedures and has presented as case studies<sup>116</sup> several strategies applied by specific corporations for the construction of their brand's imaginary. This book also offers critical comments on the relationship of the brands with the globalization<sup>117</sup> and connects the brand strategies with the functional structure of the contemporary Mass Society. But what we can consider as its major contribution is her analysis on the imaginary's content<sup>118</sup>: which are the elements that construct the brand's imaginary and how it can be later diffused in the mass society towards the today's consumer. Big part of her analysis has been mentioned in a compact form in the above paragraphs.

### **P.2.2. The other side. The advocates of the brands.**

Besides the critical voices towards the brand strategies, as the aforementioned book of Naomi Klein, there are other approaches that consider positive the function of the brand's strategies and facilitate us with case studies that explain better the phenomenon. Although the critical voices can be very important to the brand's analysis exactly because they underline the weak points of the brand's strategies and can show us the negative effects that they have in the contemporary society (especially in the level of the loss of the individual awareness), the positive approaches of the brands can inform us about the parts of the brand's strategies that can be applied in different areas of the social life and production (as it is the field of architecture) and provide us with information for the procedures of constructing a brand.

Besides of that technical information, we consider that the positive approach of the brands can show us something that is very important: the necessity of the brand to have a good image in the society. The brand, exactly because creates an imaginary with aim to be purchased by the consumer together with its product, is extremely interested in his own image and the way that the society perceives it. This is the vulnerable point of the brands. They cannot endure the critical opposition of the society, especially if they have been accused for an anti-social attitude (for example working conditions in their factories<sup>119</sup>). This may make the corporations with brand's strategy to be more socially sensitive and transparent, in comparison with the corporations that commercialize products without brand-names (for example, raw materials). So as to sum up, in order to have a more balanced perception of the brands, it is necessary previously to review the analyses of both sides (positive and critical voices). The comparison analysis of the different views can help us to construct an image more near to the reality and understand the brand's phenomenon in all its dimensions.

---

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-62. Chapter: "The brands Expands: How the logo grabbed center stage".

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 439-336. Chapter: "Consumerism versus Citizenship: The fight for the global commons".

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-62. Chapter: "The brands Expands: How the logo grabbed center stage" and *Ibid.*, 365-396, Chapter: "A tale of tree logos: The smooth, the shell and the archs".

<sup>119</sup> See Naomi Klein and her accusations against several brands that contracts factories in Asia for their production, where the working conditions are very bad. *Ibid.*, 195-231, Chapter: "The discarded factory: Degraded production in the age of the superbrand".

At the positive voices figures the book of Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo “*Pro Logo*”<sup>120</sup>. With a well-organized and structured content, their book intends to form a response to the accusations that Naomi Klein had made against the brands. It is a book that can provide to the brand’s researcher a series of useful information, related to the brand’s content and the brand’s function. More about that book we had seen already at the chapter 2.5.1, which refers to the brand’s strategy. Together we had seen some other books of the same category (in favor of the brands), which can offer significant sources of information.

**P.2.3. Brands and globalized market. The logic behind the slogan: “*If you aren’t everywhere, you are nowhere...*”.**

In the 3.1. chapter we have referred to the close relationship between the brands and the Mass Society and how the firsts cannot exist without the presence of the second. In this chapter we will refer to the relationship between the brands and the globalized market.

There is a maxim that expresses in the best way the role of the brands in the present world: “If you aren’t everywhere, you are nowhere...”. The globalized market, besides of his huge size, is characterized by his condition of interconnectivity. Every part of the world is connected with another and influences it, no matter how remote may be. The Chaos’ theory explains (with the example of the butterfly) how an action in one part of the world can influence indirectly the condition of life in another. So, the globalized market has affected the brand’s strategy.

A brand not only should create a coherent imaginary which should be well-interrelated with the product, but also should develop a diffusion’s strategy (taking in account the rules of the diffusion’s theory that we will mention below in the chapter P.2.4.) in order to guarantee the presence of the brand in all the remote parts of the globalized market. And that because the contemporary consumer, aware of the different conditions in the different parts of the globalized world, collects information (through various techniques and media – between them internet, newspaper, television) in such level that practically has expand the zone of his perception far away of the physical space where he lives. For some cases, his perception’s area is practically equal to the globalized world. So, if the consumer thinks globally and his perception is global, it is logical that, at the time of the decision of which product should purchase, to be influenced by his global perception and to choose the one that his peers (co-member of the subgroup of the diffusion’s theory) have chosen and the one that is more present in his perception’s area. Under this condition, the brands should make an effort to be globalized and to assure that their products and their images will expand in all the globalized market.

In this point we have to mention (in order to avoid confusion) that the globalized world is not equal with the physical world. It is the sum of the areas which has reached the modernization procedures of the Mass Society (with epicenter the western world). The one that has been

---

<sup>120</sup> See: Michel Chevalier and Gerald Mazzalovo, *Pro Logo: Brands as a factor of progress*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

incorporated to the globalized market through the capitalistic model and can be connected (functionally and densely) with the contemporary communication's channels (principally with internet). Of course in the local markets (parts of the globalized one) exist local brands that extend their influence only to the small limits of the local market. Those local brands compete with the global brands but from a weaker position.

#### **P.2.4. Diffusion theory and the contemporary role of the advertisement. A reflection on the architecture.**

Erroneously has been considered that the advertisement is a panacea for the diffusion of products and ideas in the contemporary Mass Society. The truth is that several analyses (related to the diffusion theories) have explained that the diffusion of materials and concepts is a more complicated procedure that has to do with the structure of the Mass Society. Maybe the more concrete diffusion's theory is the one of Bruce Ryan and Neal Gross developed in the decade of the 30'. In order to present it, I would like to quote from a text of Malcolm Gladwell, titled "*The Coolhunt*"<sup>121</sup>, written for The New Yorker Magazine, in 1997. And that because it presents compactly the aforementioned diffusion's theory and makes crucial comments for the understanding of the diffusion's procedures.

*"One of the most famous diffusion studies is Bruce Ryan and Neal Gross's analysis of the speed of hybrid seed corn in Greene County, Iowa, in the nineteen-thirties. The new seed corn was introduced there in about 1928, and was superior in every respect to the seed that had been used by farmers for decades. But it wasn't adopted all at once. Of two hundred and fifty-nine farmers studied by Ryan and Gross, only a handful had started planting the new seed by 1933. In 1934, sixteen took the plunge. In 1935, twenty-one more followed; the next year, there were thirty-six, and the year after that a whopping sixty-one. The succeeding figures were then forty-six, thirty-six, fourteen, and three, until, by 1941, all but two of the two hundred and fifty-nine farmers studied were using the new seed. In the language of diffusion research, the handful of the farmers who started trying hybrid seed corn at the very beginning of the thirties were the "innovators", the adventurous ones. The slightly larger group that followed them was the "early adopters". They were the opinion leaders in the community, the respected, thoughtful people who watched and analyzed that those wild innovators were doing and then did it themselves. Then came the big bulge of farmers in 1936, 1937, and 1938 – the "early majority" and the "late majority", which is to say the deliberate and the skeptical masses, who would never try anything until the most respected farmers had tried it. Only after they had been converted did the "laggards", the most traditional of all, follow suit. The critical thing about this sequence is that it is almost entirely interpersonal. According to Ryan and Gross, only the innovators relied to any great extent on radio advertising and farm*

---

<sup>121</sup> Malcolm Gladwell, "The Coolhunt", *The New Yorker*, March 17 (1997), 78-89. In this text Malcolm Gladwell refers to the term of the "coolhunting", the procedure employed by the sport shoes' brands to find the new cool product by interviewing members of the specific communities. In that procedure reference we can find by Naomi Klein and Joseph Heath & Andrew Potter. See: N. Klein, *No Logo*, op. cit., 63-86. And: Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter, *The rebel sell: How counterculture became consumer culture*, Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006, 192-225.



*journals and seed salesmen in making their decision to switch to the hybrid. Everyone else made his decision overwhelmingly because of the example and the opinions of his neighbors and peers*<sup>122</sup>.

From the above text we can have a better perception of the diffusion procedures. It is clear that a great extend advertisement campaign for the diffusion of a product (or an idea) cannot guarantee the success of the diffusion. In order to use the terms of the above mentioned diffusion's theory, it cannot guarantee the success exactly because the different subgroups ("early majority", "late majority", etc) which represent the large mass of our society cannot decide the adoption of a new idea or the use of product if they do not see other people (of the same subgroup where they belong) to use them before.

This attitude (the influence in the process of the decision from the other people of the same subgroup or category – what it is very well explained by the word *interpersonal* in the text) obliges us to reconsider the advertisement as a panacea and to adapt a more complicated perception of the function of advertisement. The advertisement can accelerate the transmission of the information, that means can help the in-between communication of the different subgroups (and inside them) of the Mass Society, by highlighting an interesting theme that can be subject of conversations. But it cannot persuade the innovators (the ones who have the ability to understand the changes and adapt new substantial products) that the product which it advertises worth the support of this principal group. In order to achieve the last goal, other techniques are necessary to approach them.

Showing consideration of the differences, we can use the aforementioned diffusion's theory to the architectural field. It is well-known that those subgroups exist and function with the same way in our professional community. The architects who are more respected for their approach to architecture play the role of the opinion leaders, but do not create the new changes in the architectural projection. The one who do so, are the "innovators" (using the term of the above mentioned diffusion's theory) who can understand how the society is changing, towards which direction is going, what new things can be applied and have the will to experiment with new forms or concepts in their architectural projects. They are members of our architectural community, but do not influence the majority of the architects, the "mass" of our community. The one who do so, are the "early adopter" (the "opinion leaders") who, can influence the majority of the architects, the "masses", but could not foreseen the coming changes in architecture. Those are capable to recognize the remarkable new concepts or expressions of the social changes in the architectural work of the innovators and play the role of the intervener between them and the majority of the architects.

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 82.

#### **4. How does the brand strategy influence the architectural projects? Architectural imaginary and its architectural production.**

In the previous chapters we investigated the parameters of the brand's strategy and projected them on the architecture. So, we researched which may be the content of the brand's strategy applied in architecture and on which parts of the design process may influence. In the present chapter we will try to analyze the different contents of the brand's strategy in architecture, depending on the type of the architecture it is applied in (for example, formalist or conceptual architecture). In a way, in this chapter, we test in which extent the brand's theory may be expanded on architecture. This chapter is a bridge (focusing more on the alterations and the transformations that may occur to the brand's strategy if it is applied in architecture) in order to have all the necessary analytical tools for studying specific architectural offices as cases in the fifth chapter.

##### **4.1. How does the architectural imaginary move the pencil? Design and content.**

We have referred in the third chapter to the close relationship between the imaginary and the brand. We have shown that the imaginary is the heart of the brand, the one that contains the brand's DNA, with other words, the more crucial factor which defines with accuracy the identity of the brand.

The same role, with some small differences (given the particular characteristics of the design process) has the architectural imaginary in the development of the architectural brands. In order to define the main characteristics of an architectural office (and with them, to be capable to classify it in one of the different categories, with aim to have a better understanding of the architectural panorama) we must be in the position to analyze the content of the architectural office and comprehend the identity from which it is defined. Of course, as we have already said, the architectural strategies are never pure, just following the brand's model or the services' model. In the majority of the cases, the architectural offices, for reasons of better adaptation to the circumstances, in order to acquire an advantage point in the competition with their adversaries (or for convenience) have mixed strategies combining the two models together. In this case, we have to follow an abstraction procedure, to try to isolate the strategies that correspond to the brand's model and from them to derive the content of the imaginary.

The mixed strategy (combination of brand's and services' model) is something normal that appears even to the advanced brands (from the well-known corporations, like Nike, McDonald's etc) which follow the most sophisticated brand's strategies. We can never speak about pure brand's strategies. We never meet that pure condition. At the above mentioned mixed strategies (which prevails, every time more in the cases of the most sophisticated brands), the brands had incorporated some elements from services' strategies (borrowed

them from the world of the services) in order to be able to compete with them too<sup>123</sup>. The brand's theory of course analyzes the strategies that belong to the brand's model (using the abstraction procedure that we mentioned above), but we have to bear in mind that those never appear isolated in a pure condition. The same happens in the sphere of architecture. The mixture of models<sup>124</sup> is even more obvious, cause of the fact that in architecture the brand's process is not advanced, either because the architects, having a more artist character (compare with the ones who design the brand's content of the corporations), are not interesting in those strategies, or because they are in the procedure of the brand's development, they are in the phase of transformation.

We must not forget in this point that the architecture traditionally was a service. Its production (the architectural project) was something intangible until it would be constructed. The procedure from the first contact with the client until the construction of the building contained a series of actions that were more near to the services. With the irruption of the brands in the Mass Society some architectural offices have applied the brand's strategy which has as a result to reduce the importance of the procedures and to have more significance the architectural projects by themselves, the cultural content of the architectural office and element that unifies the architectural production (the architectural imaginary). Although that happens and in some cases we have a very clear brand's character, a part of the traditional properties, related to the services still exist. So, by default, we should speak for a mixed strategy.

---

<sup>123</sup> The companies compete between them, even if they have different strategies in order to position themselves in the market (brand's strategies, services' strategies). One famous example is Microsoft and Apple. The first, a more service oriented company, the second is more a brand. In order to compete, they have to incorporate strategies that permit them to neutralize the main advantages of their adversaries. The main reason that we have a mixture of strategies is the fact that a company which belongs to one strategy has to compete companies that belong to the other. That necessity obliges them to incorporate elements that belong to their adversaries' strategies and with the use of those elements to compete them.

<sup>124</sup> The thesis considers, for example, that the case of Foster belongs to the services' strategy, having as main characteristics of his office (the ones which the office gives at its communication with the clients and the public) those that can be measured and quantitatively compared (as we have seen in the theory of the services' strategy). Those are the effective use of time (to be precise at the time programming), the accuracy at the cost estimate, the use of the technology, etc. Furthermore, another characteristic that permit us to classify Foster's office at the services is the fact that it has decided to build its reputation at its excellent curriculum, which means to promote its successful execution of several demanding projects. The number of those matters in the case of the services' strategy. Although Foster's office has the above characteristics that permit us to classify it at the services, there are elements of its strategy that belong more to the brand's strategy. For example, the incorporation of the office to the high-tech movement has given to it a type of imaginary that is related to the well-being, the comfort, the hygiene etc. The use of the bioclimatic design (not only with its strictly technical characteristics but also with its imaginary of the design that protect the environment), can be part of a brand's strategy. From the above, we may support that there is a mixture of strategies even at the Foster's office.

Mixture of strategies we can see also at architectural offices that are classified as the ones with brand's strategy. The elements of their strategies that are associated with the services' strategy are those that have been incorporated in order to give them credibility (time and cost efficiency, number of architects that work at their offices, etc). They are related with the image that they want to give of an office that is efficient and can execute the projects that they have commissioned. Those elements may not be present at the publications which refer to other architects (e.g. monographs, magazines, etc), but exist at the brochures designed for their potential clients. Another element of services' strategy that we may see to be incorporated to a brand's strategy is the fact that the architectural brand decides to be associates with offices that have more service profile. For example, Rem Koolhaas (an architectural brand) that is associated with Arup, in order to give the impression that his projects can be technologically efficient and with certainty realized.

Having that in mind, the thesis will try to investigate in which extent the architectural offices use the brand's model, how they apply it in the architectural reality (that means, which adjustments they make) and how that influences the design process. In the different categories of architecture and at the case studies that we will analyze in depth at the end, we will see how this model is or can be applied. In this chapter we will try to demonstrate how the brand's model (that means the construction of an imaginary) affects the design procedure and methodology in general, in order to see the generic characteristics of the architectural imaginary.

The architectural imaginary is a series of ideas, concepts and conditions (interconnected between them and organized in a hierarchical structure) that determines the characteristics of the designed space and give a clear idea of how it should be. The most important (and powerful) feature of the architectural imaginary (as it happens at the ordinary imaginary of the commercial brands too) is the fact that it is very compact and it acquires the characteristic of a slogan<sup>125</sup> (although it is not always easy to express it with words in a compact form). So it is easy to remember, it remains in (and for that reason it determines) the human mind and has the ability to give answers and solutions to the emerging problems during the design procedure<sup>126</sup>. This last characteristic, the ability to contain coherent solutions (in order to have a homogenized design that can give the sense of unity) is the one that makes it operational.

It is crucial to remind that the architectural imaginary we are not going to encounter in a specific project, but we should try to find it in the content of the architectural office. It is a quality of the architectural office; it characterizes the office's approach to the society and to architecture. It gives an idea of what we may expect from the office in the future projects, and

---

<sup>125</sup> The Nike's slogan "Just do it" expresses the imaginary that the company wants to associate with their products. The energy, the determination and the spontaneity that are behind that slogan is all the notions and meanings that Nike wants to characterize its imaginary. That slogan is the best way to express the Nike's imaginary, since it is compact and straight-forwards. As it can be obvious, it is very difficult, besides of creating an imaginary, to find a compact and expressive way to transmit it through a slogan or an image.

Since we speak about Nike, it is useful to mention the chapter "Nikevolution" written by Jutiki T. Gunter and Jeffrey Inaba, at the Harvard Guide to Shopping. See: Jutiki T. Gunter and Jeffrey Inaba, "Nikevolution" in Chuihua Judy Chunget al. (eds), *The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping / Harvard Design School Project on the City 2*, New York: Taschen, 2002, 543-557. In that chapter we can find some interesting information about Nike's evolution and the brand strategy that it has followed. There we read: "*Nike has evolved from the running shoe business for the elite athletes to a company that sells products to the world. More impressive than its dominance in the sports shoe and apparel industry is its achievement as a global market phenomenon. The company's message of victory seems to be so infectious that its logo, the Swoosh, can be found in official and home-made forms just about anywhere. Nike's transformation arises from the sports company's move away from athletic performance and its affiliation with the city. The city has been the source of Nike's marketing content and brand credibility*". Ibid., 543. Besides the other characteristics of the Nike's imaginary that we have mentioned in the first lines of this footnote, we have to add its urban character. Nike promotes various urban activities that it organizes, related to the sports, in order to reinforce its urban character.

<sup>126</sup> The compact character of the imaginary is its more efficient element. The fact that it is compact ensures that it contains all the meanings and the intentions that the brand wants to have. So, in the procedure of incorporating new products the imaginary of the brand is the guide in order to decide which characteristics of the new products should be reinforced. That will ensure that the new products will be incorporated naturally into the brand's production. Giving the impression that the new product was always meant to be part of the brand's production, is essential for its incorporation into the brand and in order to ensure that this product will be welcomed by the brand's customers. Whenever there is a doubt, the imaginary normally give the solution. Something similar can be detected at the procedure of designing new projects in an architectural office. The new projects should look like that they belong to the architectural production of the architectural brand. Guide for ensuring that they will do so is the office's architectural imaginary which should be expressed also through the new projects.

as a consequent, we may see its influence on each designed project. Not the way around. This is important to clarify. It is a quality of the office's brand, not of its derivatives, the projects. The imaginary is the thread that connects the past projects with the future ones and all of them with the philosophy and the aims of the architectural office.

The offices use the architectural imaginary for mainly two reasons. Firstly, for the control of the office: In the big architectural offices there should be specific standards<sup>127</sup> that can be diffused to all working architects and ensure the overall quality of the produced work. Also, in those offices there is a significant mobility. Young architects are incorporated in the offices for a small period and afterwards they will leave them. New entries will take their place<sup>128</sup>. It is indispensable that the continuity will be ensured. As we can see, the architectural imaginary and its derivatives can help to control the production of numerous architects who work at the office and, at the same time, to cope with the mobility of the architects and whatever this implies<sup>129</sup>. Secondly, for the production of a homogenized content. As we will see in the 4.2. chapter, the project in an architectural office with brand's strategy should be interconnected and ensure a continuity, which facilitates the observer to form a specific idea of the brand's content and its qualitative elements.

#### **4.2. The architectural imaginary as the spine of the office. The continuity and the interconnections between the different projects.**

As we have mentioned in the above chapter, the architectural imaginary is an intellectual construction that gives the directives for the development of the projects. The imaginary contains the available DNA that should be used in the design procedure. But this role, the one of the intermediary between the office/brand and the project is not the only and the main. The main objective of the imaginary inside the brand's strategy (and of course inside the respective strategy in the architectural offices which follow those strategies) is to control and to guarantee the continuity of the brand's identity during the different periods<sup>130</sup> and, in the

---

<sup>127</sup> In the case of the formalist architectural offices those standards are related to the form and the production of that form. The geometry plays, in this case, an important role. At the architectural offices with more conceptual approach, the standards are related with the used concepts or the methodology.

<sup>128</sup> This may be a secondary reason for an ambitious architectural office to follow a brand's strategy. The creation of a coherent brand (with its respective imaginary) that can be transmitted through the websites, the monographs, the books and the magazine, can "train" the students and the young architects (future employees) on the content of its brand. In a way, the ephemeral employees (through the architectural media) have been already trained and can be incorporated easier in the architectural office.

<sup>129</sup> The case of the numerous architects obviously corresponds to the big architectural offices. But the mobility exists also at the smaller offices, where the architectural imaginary can have the role that we explain above.

<sup>130</sup> Obviously there can be observed changes and evolutions in the architectural production of the offices and those are important and necessary, since in the majority of the cases those changes lead to improvements and a better architectural result. We mention that in case that there would be misunderstanding related to the comment that the architectural imaginary ensure the continuity during the different periods of the architectural offices. With the continuity we mean the core identity of the office which remains the same and guarantees that the office would continue to be identifiable by the other architects (and non-architects) through their projects. As it is obvious from the terminology used, the architectural imaginary is the identity of the office.

case of architecture, the (conceptual, formalist and ideological) interconnection between the different architectural projects. The architectural imaginary has as an aim to guarantee that the architectural office will be identifiable through their projects. Why is this important?

The perception of the brand's content and its assimilation cannot be realized through informational texts that the company gives to the public as an attempt the company to present itself. They used to create and diffuse these types of texts and presentations but the reality has shown that the public is not influenced by them. The communication practice has shown that those types of techniques (the direct information that moves at one direction, from the company-emitter of the message towards the client-receiver) can work in the services' strategies but doesn't function at the brand's strategies. That occurs because the comprehension of the information in the brand's communication is not realized mainly rationally (as it happens in the services' strategy) but has more emotional and instinctive characteristics, which means that the brand communication contains more irrational procedures<sup>131</sup>. The term "predisposition" is helpful in order to understand which the relationship of the client with the brand<sup>132</sup> is. The fact that the client has a predisposition it shows a favorable tendency towards the brand, which has emotional and instinctive characteristics.

---

<sup>131</sup> The decision to which service to go in order to acquire something or to solve a problem is a rational decision since we have been led to that through normally the procedure of the comparison. We gather information of what the competitor's services can offer, through a market research and we conclude to the one that is better according our criteria (e.g. it is the cheapest). The decision to which brand to go in order to buy a product doesn't follow those rational procedures. We choose the brand (as we have already written) because we want to feel and show that we belong to a group with same behavior and dress code or because we believe at the content of the brand's imaginary and we want to share it through acquiring and wearing its products. There are a variety of reasons that almost make the decision of the brand compulsory. We don't want to say that the brand chose is based to completely irrational decisions, but we want to highlight that there is an important factor that is irrational.

<sup>132</sup> We speak about the relationship that it is constructed between the client and the brand, but we have to mention that this relationship is more complex. We will explain it in the field of architecture, although similar level of complexity exists and in the other fields of brand theory's implementation. The architectural office has as clients individuals or groups (private entities) with whom it has worked in the past or are willing to do so in the future. In order to construct this relationship (if the office follows the brand theory) it uses the brand's strategy. But besides the private commissions there are the public ones. The public entities (regional or city governments, for example) having the responsibility to explain their decisions to their citizens, are obviously very sensitive at the opinion that their citizens' have. As it is reasonable, the architectural offices therefore, should incorporate in their strategies the aim of a greater influence of their brand to the broader public. This can be achieved through the publications and more than that through the exhibitions.

Another target (besides of the individual clients, the private societies/companies that could commission a project and the public governments –and through them the public opinion) are the architects. The architectural brands what to extent their area of influence to them, not only for vanity reasons (the need of the artists to be remembered in the future). We have spoken already about the relationship of architects and meta-architects and the business that exists at the various forms of publications. Also about the cheap, mass community of students or young architects (another target for the architectural brands) that are willing to work at a well-known architectural office, in order to have that "experience" at their curriculum. More than that, the other architects can have a more effective role in the brand strategy. Behind the restricted competitions (where the architectural brands are usually invited to participate) there are normally architects who advice the private societies who to invite. And finally, the local architectural community influences the local public opinion, in order to come back to the role of the public opinion at the commission of public projects above. [The case of Calatrava and the commission of the Athens 2004 Olympic Projects designed by him is an example of how the architectural community (unwillingly) can influence the public opinion]. There are additionally other factors that can be mentioned which determine the brand's strategy and create important actors at the network of relationships that the architectural brand should formulate in order to be successful. We will stay to the already commented network of relationships (brand, individual clients, private entities, public governments, public opinion, architects). It is already obvious that this network is complex.

In the brand world it is important to understand how the outside observer (the client or the no client) reacts to the information that he receives. What normally happens is consciously or unconsciously the public to perceive and analyze the different brand's products and, by trying to find the common elements that interconnect them, to reach a conclusion that can give a meaning to the brand's content, an identity to the brand. The common elements, the meaning, the identity are, in other words, the imaginary. Through the products the observer reconstructs in his mind the brand's imaginary, the narrative of the brand, we may say. Through the brands he is capable to test the cohesion of the brand's imaginary (as it has come to him through different communication's roads). This procedure is favored by the human mind mechanism that, needing to understand and associate things that come from the same source, processes its contents and interconnects the common ones, those that are the same, in order to reach a conclusion. We have spoken about clients and no clients above. The same procedures happened in both of the cases, the different thing is the affiliation that the firsts have and do not have the seconds towards the brand, the predisposition, in other words, that the firsts have.

The same happens in architecture. The observer does not limit himself to the texts and the presentations that the architectural brands have created for themselves and diffuse through their website or the architectural media. They read them and they try to comprehend them, but those are not deciding factors in order to recreate (in the observer's mind) the overall imaginary of the architectural brands, because normally they are texts and information about specific projects (are projects descriptions). There barely exist texts that move their focus from explaining the specific to describing the broader intentions and the aims<sup>133</sup> of those architectural offices. For that reason, the presentations that we read either are quite theoretical or very descriptive (without any disposal to refer or comment the crucial parts of their design procedure). We should not be unfair with the architecture. This happens to the most sophisticated and advanced brands. There is not the intention to explain the imaginary rationally. And that because a procedure to explain the imaginary rationally will lead to the demystification of the imaginary. As we have already said, the imaginary is a complex, dense construction that contains concentrated meanings, notions, intentions and attitudes (besides others) that if it is dismantled (and the process of understanding is an intellectual dismantling) that will leads to its collapsed or, at least, to its demystification.

There is also one more reason, the understanding of the critical part of each project, the basic decisions that condition the project, doesn't happen solely by reading a text, it's not exclusively an intellectual procedure. It contains the information from all our senses (if we speak about a constructed project, which we have visited) or, at least, the implication of the vision, comparing photos, plans, sections and elevations. To make a long story short, the understanding of a project and the capacity to cipher out or to decode it (by detecting the main architectural decisions that had conditioned and created it) is a complex procedure that requires knowledge, experience and technique. Those three (and the complex procedure that combines them) are maybe the most important things that the architects "learn" from their education.

---

<sup>133</sup> It is true that there are the texts under the section "philosophy" or "about" in the websites or the official brochures, but they normally are general texts, politically correct written that we see to exists more or less the same in all the cases.

For the above reasons, the only way really to understand the content, the design process and the identity of an architectural office is to analyze their projects separately (through that complex analytical procedure that we have mentioned in the previous paragraph) and after having done that, to try to interconnect those projects, trying to find the common elements, procedures, design strategies, decisions or forms that can make sense, give a meaning in order to understand how the architectural office works. This approach can finally create an identity that we can infuse it to the brand. That identity is the imaginary that we explain in this thesis. In other words, the imaginary is the distillate, the extract, the essence that we take from the analysis (or better say, the understanding<sup>134</sup>) of the projects. This is, I estimate, the only safe procedure in order to find and read the imaginary of an architectural brand.

Having said the above, and having explained which we think is the procedure to find and read the architectural imaginary, we estimate that the construction of the imaginary by the architectural brands follows a specific direction. After working in several projects in their first period (the pre-brand period we may say) and having gathered experience, having experimented and having decided their positions in the architectural panorama, the architectural offices conclude to which design elements, procedures, concepts and forms they should use, since those are the appropriate to express themselves. Those elements (the forms, concepts, procedures, design strategies, aims, materials, sensations etc) are the structural elements of the brand's imaginary. The procedure of constructing the imaginary with those elements is not easy, there is not one way to do it and cannot be explained rationally, since it involves a complex intellectual process which implicates a variety of individuals and different approaches. That procedure is a black box<sup>135</sup> that not even the creators of the imaginary are capable to explain how it comes up. What we have at the end of that procedure is a complex and compact construction that contains all the necessary information in order to understand the brand. It is a construction that can express the brand's identity. It is the DNA of the brand, for that reason with that we can understand the key elements of each project and we may attempt to predict how the architectural brand will evolve in the future<sup>136</sup>.

The content of the imaginary and the procedure for its creation (as we have seen), may be difficult to be explained. What it isn't difficult to be explained is the way that it is been used by the architectural brands. Being the imaginary the heart of the brand, it is used as a compass and guide for the elaboration of each project. All the characteristic elements of the imaginary are left in each project, for that reason the imaginary is the *lowest common denominator* of every project. The imaginary is the link that interconnects all the projects and guarantees the wanted continuity. A continuity that it is of vital important since it ensures the competitiveness

---

<sup>134</sup> Having said all the above, regarding the rational and the irrational in the comprehension of the imaginary, the analysis is the outcome of a rational procedure and for that reason maybe it is not an accurate term for what we want to explain. On the other hand, the understanding may contains and irrational procedures and for that reason, it is a more accurate term.

<sup>135</sup> At the chapter P.1.2 we have referred to the "emergent strategy", a theory developed by Henry Mintzberg in order to explain which the outcome of that black box is. According to Henry Mintzberg, the decisions cannot be taken completely rationally, they emerge from a complex procedure of decision making and as such should be evaluated. See: Henry Mintzberg, *The rise and fall of strategic planning: Reconceiving roles for planning, plans, planners*, Toronto: Free Press, 1994.

<sup>136</sup> Only, of course, if the architectural brand decides to maintain its imaginary in the future too. We have to mention that, since we have examples that they have try to change (unsuccessfully) imaginary or to change strategy, from following a brand's strategy to switch to the services' strategy.



of the brand. From the above we can understand why the architectural imaginary is the intellectual spine of the office.

#### **4.3. The competition of architecture with other professional communities. The architectural brands as possible solution?**

The architects are not the only professionals who practice in the construction field. Coexist with other professionals who, as it is logical, try to expand the field of their competences and incorporate a larger part of the construction process for their own benefit. If we expend this field in order to incorporate in it the real estate, we will find more professionals who compete in the same professional area. The competences of architecture is not the same in all over the world and although in some countries are officially formulated and defined, there are cases where informally, other professional groups and interests have been involved in the construction process and appropriate the leadership. In order to give an example, the last years (with the climatic changes) the public opinion has become sensitive to the environmental problems. This situation gives importance to the environmental engineers, whose opinion gains strength in the public debate. The public debate determines the political agenda and as a consequence the political decisions. The last years this situation has as a result the environmental engineers and their professional group to play a decisive role in the architectural projects for the public works. There are cases where the environmental engineers (who have been involved after a political decision) assume up to the leadership of the design group, a role that officially had, up to now, the architect.

These types of changes in the competitiveness of the architect and in the field of the competences that he disposes are happening also in other countries, with different forms. Involved in the procedure of the architectural project, from a privileged position, are in Greece the civil engineers and, in some cases, the archeologist. The firsts maintain the leadership in the construction field and the real estate, since they exercise the role of the constructor, in parallel with their main professional work which is the calculation of the structure. The lasts maintain a decisive role in Greece in areas that the archeological interest is significant and have a privileged role in the construction sector in Italy, especially in the historical cities. Nowadays, there is a part of the public opinion that considers the video-game designers capable to imagine better spectacular spaces dedicated to the recreation. And this isn't something new. From the decade of the 60', the animators had a decisive role in the creation of the Disneylands<sup>137</sup> and afterwards at the construction of the Celebration<sup>138</sup>, a small town in

---

<sup>137</sup> See the chapter that has been written by Chuihua Judy Chung in the Harvard Guide to Shopping, which refers to the construction of various types of buildings or urban projects under the influence of the Disney Corporation. See: Chuihua Judy Chung, "Disney Space" in Chuihua Judy Chung et al. (eds), *The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping / Harvard Design School Project on the City 2*, New York: Taschen, 2002, 271-297. As we read there: "*Disney Space is the invention of a new urbanism by a single individual, Walt Disney, whose yearnings for an idealized environment produced a series of, in retrospect, visionary movies that irreversibly transformed the composition of the twentieth-century city. Disney's humble desire resulted in the radical conversion of the city, from public to private, modern to neo-traditional, noncommercial to commercial. He accomplished this transformation by generating a template – recycling and reengineering an earlier architecture and urbanism into a new commercial*

Florida. There is a big list, depending the country and the region, with examples of the competences' disputes that the architects have had with other professionals. All the above can be summarized to the question of how the architectural community can defend its professional competences and possibly expand them.

From the point of view of this thesis we will like to raise the question if the architectural community, forming architectural brands, is capable to defend or/and expand its competences? If, as we had seen in above chapters, the architectural offices as brands, are capable to create an imaginary, related to the architectural projects that they design, then can't give this strategy a way out to our profession difficulties and increase the competitiveness of our community? In this case, the architects will not compete with the other professional groups in the level of service<sup>139</sup> supply, but will be capable to create an imaginary, a complete spatial proposal, which will dispose a surplus value. Those architectural projects (depending on the scale of the place and on the promoter's ambition) can reflect not only the architects' capacity to form new types of spaces, but additionally can contain a communicative strategy towards the citizens and multiple ideas of how those spaces can be used.

---

*nostalgia – that, is its renewable versatility, subsequently proved adaptable everywhere*". Ibid., 271. The success of the Disneyland was not because the animators can design better than the architects (obviously, in the creation of those projects were involved various architects). The success was based on the fact that they had a clear concept which created a clear and powerful imaginary (the nostalgia for our childhood and the need to disconnect from the hard reality and to live some hours in a fairytale environment). The Disneyland is obvious that was the creation of a very powerful brand. In this well-written chapter we can find some interesting information, between them, which was the procedure to design the first Disneyland. *"Disneyland Park is designed by animation... With fantasy motivating the design of Disneyland, real architecture and urbanism and their classical principles prove incompatible with and inadequate for Walt's [Disney] vision of space. And so he formulates a series of design principles and approaches to propel architecture and urbanism towards fantasy: animation, cinematography, scale manipulation, forced perspective, and the 'wienie'. In 1953 Walt commissions the architecture firm Pereira and Luckman to develop the concept and master plan of Disneyland. But Walt and the studio soon realize that the personal quality of the project requires designers who understand Walt's methods of thinking and working. The project is then given to Disney's Imagineers. 'Imagineering' is Walt's coinage to describe the interrelated nature of design and animation work at Disney Studios: imagination + engineering. While all are animators, Imagineers have diverse backgrounds with training in different fields. By 1996, in addition to artists, the Imagineering Division includes twelve hundred planners, designers, architects, engineers, computer scientists, and construction managers"*. Ibid., 276.

<sup>138</sup> *"Celebration opens on 18 November 1996, testing Walt's approach to architecture and urbanism on an actual town. Celebration's master plan is designed not by Imagineers, but by the architects Robert Stern and Jaquelin Robertson. Its buildings are designed by other well-known architects: Aldo Rossi, Charles Moore, Cesar Pelli, William Rawn, Michael Graves, Philip Johnson, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown (...) Using design devices identical to those that generated Disneyland Park, these world-renown architects set about designing Celebration as a 'traditional town built anew' with traditional styles of architecture and urbanism, reformulated to meet 'contemporary needs"*. Ibid., 293 and Master plan at Ibid., 294-295. The Celebration, as it was described above, may not have the nostalgia and the fairytale environment of the Disneyland, brand's characteristics of the Disney Company, but has succeeded to create the Celebration's imaginary, of a traditional, quiet and easy-going environment of the ideal American suburbia.

<sup>139</sup> It is characteristic that all the examples used at the beginning of this chapter (at the professional dispute that has the architectural community with other professional groups) are in the level of the services. Maybe in that level we have difficulties to be competitive and to draw successful services' strategies.

#### 4.4. The architectural imaginary and its design according to the architects' design methods.

As we had mentioned above, the architectural imaginary is directly related to the design methods of the architects who form the architectural brands. The architectural imaginary is a constructed intellectual framework that aim has to give an identity to the architectural brand, to create a concrete and coherent meaning. A meaning, a concept that characterizes and defines the architectural production, either it is an architectural project, or an architectural event. As we have seen in the chapter 3.5.2., the combination of those projects/activities/events forms the architectural brand's imaginary.

Although the architectural imaginary as a structure is the same for all the architectural brands (and has acquired its structure from the general brand's theory), the content of that imaginary depends on the architects' design methods and the preferences that they have. It is logical that different content of architectural imaginary will have the architects that practice a formalist architecture (obviously, more related to the form that they design) and different content will have the architects with more clear conceptual orientation. In the following three chapters we will try to show those differences, how they influence the content of the architectural imaginary and consequently how the last affects the produced architectural projects.

##### 4.4.1. Formalist architecture and its constructed imaginary. (Miralles, Ghery, Zaha Hadid, Morphosis, the aggloraxonic architectural school).

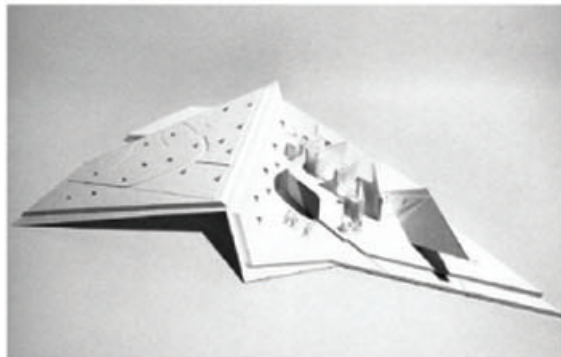
One important part of the architectural practice is oriented to the creation of architecture with predominant factor the form. In this category of architectural studios the implication of techniques that investigate and create the architectural form is the base of their work. Although there are exceptions, the majority of those architectural offices are related to (or influenced from) the so called aggloraxonic architectural school<sup>140</sup>, a way of thinking and conceiving architecture as form. Many of those offices have created architectural brands; the most well-known are Zaha Hadid with base in England and Frank Gehry<sup>141</sup> and Morphosis

<sup>140</sup> Of course, formalist architects exist all over the world and it is not a privilege of the aggloraxonic architectural school to educate architects of that architectural approach. We use this reference mainly in order to support that the formalist architects have found a fertile ground in this architectural environment and additionally it is a benchmark for all of them who are interested in the formalist architecture.

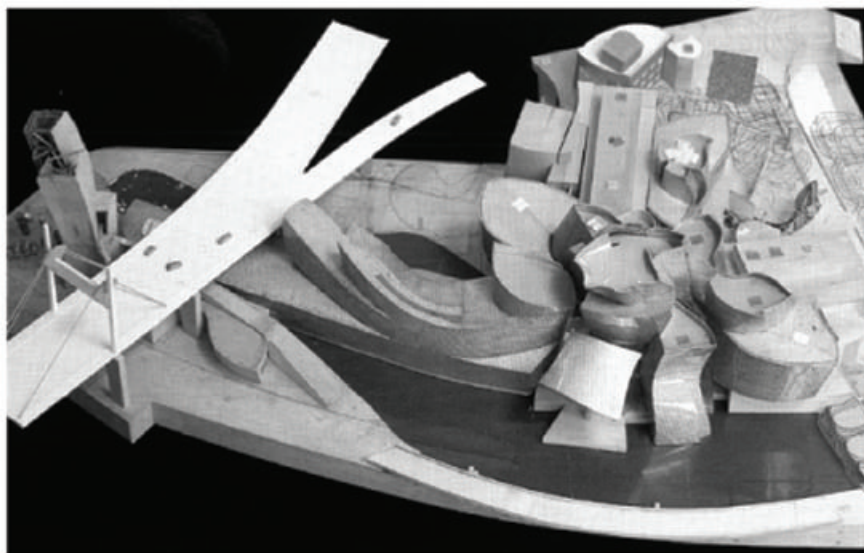
<sup>141</sup> An interesting approach on the work of Frank Gehry we can find at the book of Rafael Moneo. See: Rafael Moneo, *Theoretical anxiety and design strategies: in the work of eight contemporary architects*, Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 2004, 254-305. In that book, Moneo explains the origins of the Gehry's forms and shows the depth of the notions which are related to them. It is an important text since it reveals the background which is associated with the forms and doesn't limit his analysis in a more superficial level, where the formalists are presented as architects who play with the form, without their forms to have any deeper signification than the creation of interesting aesthetic images. On the contrary, the meaning (and the symbolism) that is behind of the form is important since that (the meaning) is associated to the content of the formalist' imaginary.

In order to speak about the forms themselves, Rafael Moneo makes an interesting comment: "*In this way, Gehry, liberated from the repertoire of preexisting forms, transforms himself into what he so much wanted to be, an inventor of forms. The latest Gehry, the Gehry of the Guggenheim, models his*

*Z. Hadid, Maggie's Center, Fife, Scotland*



*F. Gehry, Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao*



with base in USA. In the formalist architecture (although outside of the agglotaxonic architectural school) we can locate the work of Miralles. As we can derive from the above mentioned architects as examples, their architectural offices relate the architectural imaginary that they create to their ability to produce seductive forms and architectural images. They conceive design as a medium to construct an architecture which has as important<sup>142</sup> outcome a high-standard final aesthetic level. The quality of the forms that they create has as an aim to improve the aesthetics in the contemporary Metropolises.

In their case, the aesthetic approach of architecture defines the content of their imaginary and their identifiable forms are converted to their logo. They are recognized by the figurative character of their interventions, are considered more handcrafter than intellectuals, with an architectural work where the image predominates on the *logos*. As a consequence, their constructed architectural imaginary is more formalist, expressed by images and diffused by aesthetic methods, with a capacity the form to be identified immediately when it will be seen. The message (aesthetic in this case) is directly transmitted (because of the visual power that the forms have) and this can cause a straight impact at the observer. On the grounds that in the contemporary Mass Society the image has a predominant role, the formalist architectural brands have a more direct impact cause that their proposals can be perceived and appraised<sup>143</sup> easier by the citizens. One of their principal preoccupations is the maintenance of their created form in a high aesthetic level and the coherence in the production of architectural forms, though that the significant change of the produced form (to which they have been related) can generate confusion and can prejudice their brand.

In this point it is important to mention that, although it is true that the aesthetic criterion is the most significant factor to evaluate the formalist production, it cannot be the only one. Because, in that case, we will have a superficial approach of the created architecture. The forms do not only have aesthetic value, but also they carry meanings and symbolism that are particularly important, especially for the formalist architects who design architecture under a brand's strategy. We argue that the meanings and the symbolism which are associated with the formalist created form are important, since they must be related to the office's imaginary, an intellectual construction by default, which contains notions, meanings, aesthetic values, emotions, opinions for the role of architecture in the society, etc. Furthermore, the form (in an architectural brand environment) should also have the necessary depth in order to carry a density of spatial events, indispensable for architecture with qualities.

The representations (drawings, sketches, paintings, models) are also a considerable factor for the creation of their brand. Through the representation media they can achieve to interconnect the projects and create a coherent image of their architectural production, since the representation is made normally under specific rules and has a common aesthetic result.

---

*architecture with absolute freedom*". Ibid., 305. "The Gehry as inventor of forms" is a crucial comment in order to understand his architecture as a branded one.

<sup>142</sup> The aesthetics is an important but not the only factor in their architecture. It is arguable if it is the principle one. Otherwise we will reach a superficial approach which is not the aim of the present thesis.

<sup>143</sup> In the case of the formalist, the created form can be perceived and evaluated immediately. There is not the need of the mediation of the reason, as it is the case of the conceptual architecture, where, on the one hand, the meaning (concept) should be transmitted correctly by the emitter and, at the same time, the receiver must have the appropriate cultural and intellectual background, in order to catch and evaluate the concept.

That continuity in the aesthetics of their representation media we can observe, for example, in the representations of Zaha Hadid or Enric Miralles and at the models of Frank Gehry<sup>144</sup>. A continuity that doesn't exist (at least in that extent) at the representations of other architectural offices that do not have a formalist approach. In other words, the common aesthetics in the representations has as an aim to be identifiable.

For the formalist architects the use of the form is also important at a symbolic level. It is a statement to which aesthetic movement they belong or from which movement they consider that are descendant (e.g. neo-suprematists or neo-constructivists). We can speak about a genealogy of form and to which category of that genealogy each formalist architect wants to declare that he/she belongs. The use of the form, as we can see, above all, is a statement of belonging to a specific group. The form is not simply an identity in order to be recognized, identifiable. It is an identity in order the others to associate the architect with a specific group<sup>145</sup>.

Speaking about the role of the form in the design procedure, we should mention here that in most of the cases the creation of the form is not an isolated activity: a simple manipulation of form with aim to please the eye. The statement: "the formalists manipulate the form simple in order to achieve an aesthetic result", it is used often by the non-formalist architects as an accusation, but it is not accurate. Of course the aesthetics for the formalist architects is an important factor which must be reached at the end, it is a criterion which can verify that the final result is acceptable, but it is not an end by itself. In many cases the manipulation of the form is the instrument for the achievement of a specific goal<sup>146</sup> which is not associated directly with the aesthetics.

---

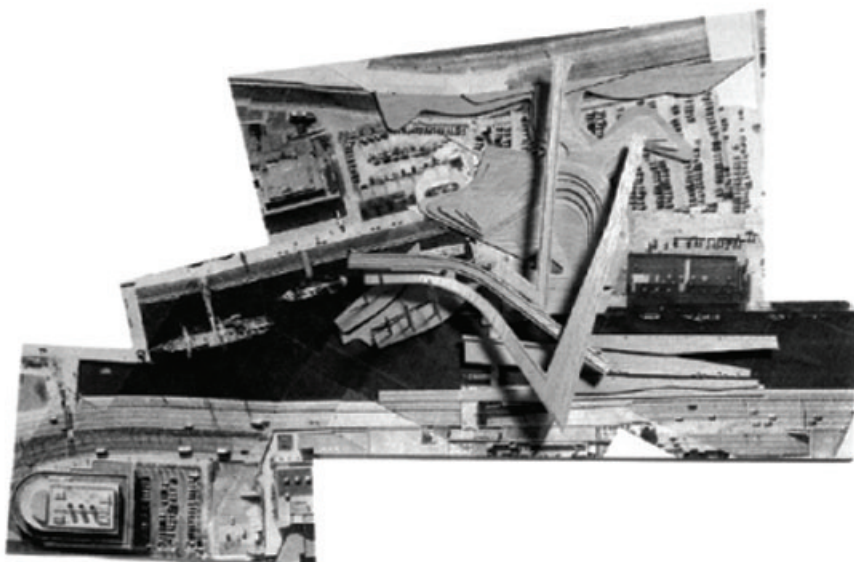
<sup>144</sup> The models in the case of Frank Gehry are not only representation tools that can show the aesthetic value of his projects and, simultaneously, can highlight the continuity of the Gehry's work. Additionally, they are manifestation of Gehry's formalist approach to architecture, since some of them are working models. He actually "constructs" the space through them, as we will see, through the manipulation of the form. *"He anticipates the future through the model. The model becomes the vehicle of his work. The architect touches the pieces, feel them, and in the direct contact with the pieces the form of the construction is forged. It is in manipulating the predefined shapes [in his pre-Guggenheim period] that Gehry detects the place to be occupied by each in the whole, and discerns the potential of each shape to break, erode, etc. Such proximity to the gestation of the architecture suits the architect. The idea is to eliminate outside mediation or interference. For Gehry, hence, models are not mere reductions – or versions at another scale – of the future reality. They are architectures in themselves. The challenge of the architect is to maintain the immediacy of the model in the actual building". Ibid., 258-259.*

<sup>145</sup> The association can be with specific group or specific groups, in plural. The influence can be from more than one architectural movement (if the architect has an eclectic position).

<sup>146</sup> For the project "Vitra Fire Station" Zaha explains: *"There are various concerns with regard to Vitra Fire Station, but ultimately it has to do with the making of space, more than anything else. It is hard to actually achieve space which is interwoven, a space that is transparent. The issue about lightness and movement... how you can achieve that through building, how the difference between inside and outside is very precarious, was the most interesting thing for me about Vitra".* See: Luis Rojo de Castro, "Conversation with Zaha Hadid" in Fernando Marquez Cecilia and Richard Levene (eds.), "Zaha Hadid 1983-2004", *El Croquis* 53+72+103, Madrid: El Croquis Editorial (2004), 28. Zaha Hadid seems to try to dissolve the distinction between inside and outside through the use of the form, through the manipulation of the form.

In the same interview Zaha Hadid comments about the "Multimedia Art Media in Dusseldorf", in order to explain that there is a need (and not the aesthetics) that determined the design decisions: *"The fragmentation of the project responds to the specific way in which to place the building in relation to the water, so you had the view. It is not fragmented randomly. It is really seen as one place that is broken in one or two incidents in order to perceive and even reach the water through this one long building". Ibid., 30.*

*E. Miralles/EMBT, New Center in Bremerhaven Port, Germany*

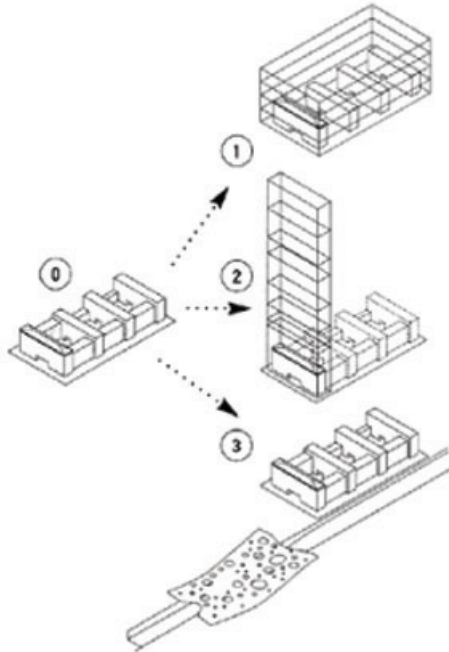


*Z. Hadid, Drawings for the Blueprint Pavilion in Birmingham, UK*

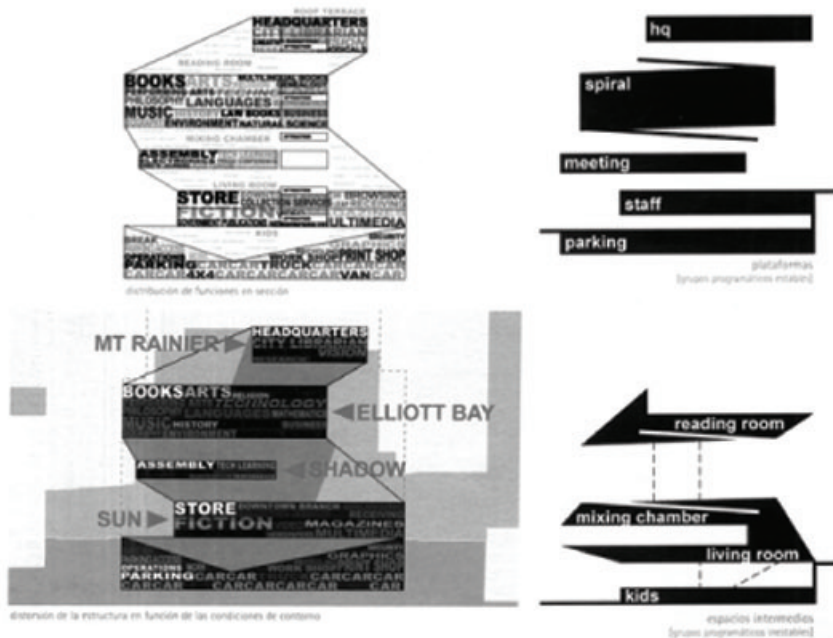




MVRDV, LNV New Offices of the Ministry of Agriculture in The Hague, The Netherlands



R. Koolhaas/OMA, Seattle Public Library. Diagrammatic schemes of the Library's functions



*NL Architects, Basketbar. Cafe with basketball Pitch for the University of Utrecht*



*Bjarke Ingles/BIG, Mountain Dwellings in Copenhagen, Denmark*



In the case of the formalist architectural brand, major importance is the control of the form. Since most of the well-known architects of this category have a big office and a lot of employees are working for them, it will be easy to lose the control of their main brand's characteristic: the form. For that reason they have specific control protocols for the unified use of the branded forms. For example, the shapes that organize the architectural forms in Miralles' work can be perfectly analyzed in a geometrical base and there can be given specific instructions for their reproduction. Another key factor in this architectural category is the concept of repetition. If the main form (although there can exist variations) is the element that it is kept the same during a period, then it is logical, to repeat that recognized and significant form which consists the architectural signature, the brand of the office. That recognized form is the conjunctive design component that connects and interrelates the projects between themselves, constituting continuity and giving a specific character to the architectural production (that means creating a brand). In the current period, where the unprecedented and fresh is an objective, speaking about repetition will certainly sound obsolete and service-oriented. But with an exception: the formalist architecture where we love to see them to repeat themselves creatively...

#### **4.4.2. Conceptual architecture and its constructed imaginary (OMA/Rem Koolhaas, MVRDV, the Dutch architectural school).**

Another important part of the architectural practice is oriented to the production of architecture with predominant factor the concept. In this category of architecture, the re-definition of the program<sup>147</sup>, the hybridization of functions or spatial situations, the implication of techniques (such as "data mining"<sup>148</sup>) that facilitates the search of information, or the implication of design strategies (such as "displacement of concepts"<sup>149</sup>) that helps to implement in a new

<sup>147</sup> The famous programming is something that we will see analytically at the case study of Rem Koolhaas and the reference that we will do to MVRDV, both of them in chapter 5.

<sup>148</sup> See: Winy Maas and MVRDV, *Metacity, datatown*, Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999 and an interview that they principle architects of MVRDV have given: "*Datascape can be seen as a kind of technique or a tool that tries to unfold the chaos theories, which appear so much in the current architectural debate. By using this it tries to escape from the mythical hide-away of the existing chaos notions. I suppose the work we've done in the last three years could all be considered as datascares, in the sense that they all try to say something about the limitations which you encounter, which are set up by society, by the rules, or by the building laws which are set up*". Luis Moreno Mansilla and Emilio Tunon, "The Space of Optimism" in Fernando Marquez Cecilia and Richard Levene (eds.), "MVRDV 1991-2002", *El Croquis* 86+111, Madrid: El Croquis Editorial (2003), 14.

<sup>149</sup> For the displacement, Juan Antonio Cortes has an interesting article. See: Juan Antonio Cortes, "Delirious and More. I. The lessons of the skyscraper" in Fernando Marquez Cecilia and Richard Levene (eds.), "AMOMA - Rem Koolhaas [I] 1996-2006", *El Croquis* 131/132, Madrid: El Croquis Editorial (2006), 9-31. There we can read: "*These two features [1. segregation between the building's interior and its outer skin, 2. Stacked independent floors in a single structure] pointed out by Koolhaas may be regarded as a 'displacement' of the key architectural concepts involved in Le Corbusier's Domino structure and enunciated in his 'Five points', transformed significantly in function of a factor that the Swiss-French master had not considered: Bigness, and another important aspect: these are not purely constructive and formal aspects*". Ibid., 11. As Juan Antonio Cortes explains, the term is used in the sense that Alan Colquhoun used it in his essay at the book "Meaning and Change in Architecture" for Le Corbusier. The displacement is the method to use a concept that exists somewhere else and was created by someone else in a new situation, under new conditions, transforming or changing it. Juan Antonio Cortes in the same monograph but in another article, he explain more the notion of

environment something that exists somewhere else, are some of the procedures that have as aim the creation of some coherent concepts, which will serve as base for their architectural projects. Many of those architectural offices are related to the so called Dutch architectural school<sup>150</sup>, a way of thinking and conceiving architecture as concept. The majority of those offices have created architectural brands, since that intellectual procedure can easily be the instrument for the implementation of the offices' architectural imaginary. In other words, the conceptual approach is fully compatible with the brand's strategy, since the creation of the imaginary is an intellectual procedure similar to the one that uses the conceptual architecture for the architectural production.

Although the majority of the architects may estimate that the formalist architecture is an easier field to construct a brand, since the form is a visual identity element which is easier to be recognizable and for that reason, it is easier through the form to create a brand; the construction of the brand (as a mechanism) it is nearer to the conceptual architecture (despite the fact that it is more difficult to prove/demonstrate) since they share a common semantic element, the concept.

The most well-known architectural offices in this category are OMA/Rem Koolhaas and MVRDV. In this category can be incorporated the Elemental in Chile, Fernando Romero in Mexico, NL architects in the Netherlands and Bjarke Ingels, besides others. As we can conclude from the above mentioned offices as case studies, those architectural offices relate the architectural imaginary that they create to their ability to create innovative architectural

---

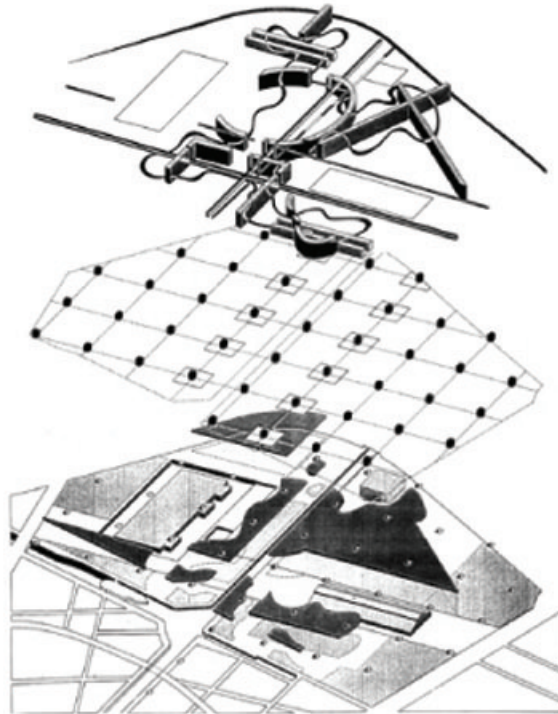
displacement that he uses: "(...) *Rem Koolhaas [and] OMA do not subscribe unconditionally to these 'permanent' qualities [space, weight, integrity and scale], nor do they reject or ignore them. What they do is to tackle them from a new angle, in accordance with the ever-changing situation, transforming them into design strategies – void, gravity, montage, size and leaps in scale, etc – , in which the terminological change is in itself indicative of the 'displacement' they have been subject to.*" Juan Antonio Cortes, "Delirious and More. II. Strategy vs. Architecture" in Fernando Marquez Cecilia and Richard Levene (eds.), "AMOMA - Rem Koolhaas [I] 1996-2006", *El Croquis* 131/132, Madrid: El Croquis Editorial (2006), 57.

The displacement as a design method appears in the same text of Juan Antonio Cortes, where, referring to the Universal Headquarters Building, he comments: "*Explaining the project, the OMA/AMO pointed out that on this organizational scale, architecture comes close to the sphere of urban planning and, 'the building is an infrastructure that organizes the coexistence of different elements. A diagram of its organization resonates more with subway maps than with building plans'. In addition, the organization diagram or diagrams in question are section diagrams. In other words, there is a double 'displacement': a leap in scale – from architectural to urban – and a change of position, turning the horizontal plan into the vertical plan*". Ibid., 33.

We have mentioned in the previous chapter the genealogy of form. We can speak of genealogy of concept, since the concepts have been conceived with different form by each architect. The nearest we can reach to genealogy is the above mentioned "displacement" of the concept, which is a type of genealogy, since the re-use of the concept is nothing less than establishing a connection, a dialogue with the previous architect.

<sup>150</sup> Obviously (as we have explained in the previous chapter for the agglotaxonic architectural school and its relation to the formalist architecture), there exist in all over the world architectural teams that work with a conceptual approach and they existed even before the decade of the 70', when are the origins of the "Dutch conceptual architectural school". We use this phrase in order to show how important is the Dutch architectural community after the 1970 as an incubator for the development of the conceptual architecture and how important role had played (and still plays) as ideological lighthouse for the promotion of that architectural approach. The Dutch architectural community (with its major representatives: Rem Koolhaas and MVRDV) and its activities (exhibitions, publications, etc) was/is always a benchmark for all those architects who were/are interested in the conceptual architecture. The Neoplasticism which has been an important ideological and cultural movement in the past at the Netherlands should have played a decisive role in the establishment of the conceptual approach at that country.

*B. Tschumi, La Villette Park in Paris*



*A. Aravena/Elemental, Housing in Iquique, Chile*



*MVRDV, the premises of the The Why Factory in Delft University*



concepts and to produce new combinations of architectural functions that before haven't been used. In other words, to put near functions that before haven't been connected (programming) or to shape building interrelating architectural conditions that before were alienated. Some of the times, their architectural imaginary is related to the hybridization of the concepts<sup>151</sup>.

The conceptual architects conceive architecture as a medium to participate in the social changes and to introduce a new way of living and acting in the society. They believe that the quality of the concepts that they produce can improve the conditions of living in the contemporary Metropolises and express better the Mass Society. They produce concepts "*attractive enough to be contagious and malleable enough to survive many contexts and uses*"<sup>152</sup>. The conceptual architects are more political. They understand that through architecture they don't just create pleasant environment for the citizens (some of them they are not even interested in that and in the aesthetic result of their architecture), but new spaces for the citizens' interventions and interactions. The conceptual architecture is an environment that should facilitate those interventions and interactions. Some of the conceptual architects speak about the "event"<sup>153</sup> and the role that it has, as a dynamic mechanism, for the design of new spaces or the re-design of the existing ones (e.g. urban interventions).

In their case, the conceptual approach of architecture defines the content of their imaginary and their capacity to read the current condition is converted to their vantage point. They are recognized by the conceptual character of their interventions, are considered more intellectuals than handcrafter (to the point that some of them are not interested at all in the form that they produce), with an architectural work where the *logos* predominates on the image. As a consequence, their constructed architectural imaginary is more characterized by ideas and concepts, expressed by charts, flowcharts or diagrams and diffused by communicative methods and media. They are political (with tendencies for political analysis<sup>154</sup>) and consider their architecture a form to intervene at the society and the political dialogue. Under this point of view, it is not strange that they chose to associate with political entities<sup>155</sup> in order to find a way to realize this part of their character.

---

<sup>151</sup> Creating a hybrid concept, that means to create a new concept through the coalition of two or more concepts. We have spoken about the hybridization in the chapter 2.3, where we have referred to its qualities.

<sup>152</sup> See Matthew Stadler, "The Story of K." in Veronique Patteuw (ed.), *What is OMA: Considering Rem Koolhaas and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture*, Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2003, 126.

<sup>153</sup> The most well-known (with theoretical abilities, in parallel to his design efficiency) is Bernard Tschumi. His book: Bernard Tschumi, *Event-cities*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996 may be considered as his design manifesto, where he explains the role of the event in his architecture. In parallel, as a theoretical support to his architectural approach can be perceived his book: Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994. His winning project in the competition of La Villette Park, which has been realized, is the first (and maybe more successful) implementation of his strategy to use the event as a catalyst for the design of the architectural projects.

<sup>154</sup> For example, see the analysis for "right wing think tanks" an "left wing action tanks" by AMO, at the book: Rem Koolhaas, *Content*, Koln: ed. Taschen, 2004, 100-101.

<sup>155</sup> See the association of AMO/OMA with the European Commission for the design of the new European Union's flag, in the form of a barcode. *Ibid*, 388-391. The same office with the local national government for the research of Lagos, *Ibid*, 276-289. The Elemental in Chile with the regional government of Iquique for the design and construction of a housing project. See: Mario Ballesteros et al. (eds.), "Crisis", *Verb 6* (2008), 54-59 and *Ibid.*, 278-293. Also: Alejandro Aravena, "The City as a source of Equity" in Mario Ballesteros et al. (eds.), "Crisis", *Verb 6* (2008), 160-167.

They are interested also in the economy<sup>156</sup>, as a factor for understanding the society. In some cases we have seen conceptual architectural offices to establish collaboration with companies<sup>157</sup> (from other professional fields) which operate in the construction's field. Those intentions although hasn't led yet to the establishment of hybrid multi-professional operational groups, show the interest of the conceptual offices to be operational and competitive in a difficult professional field. They are strategic<sup>158</sup> and for that reason they need to have a clear broader understanding of the reality. In order to achieve that they rely on numbers/facts and data that can give them an objective perspective of the situation. They are extroverted and communicative, inventing new means in order to express the content of their interventions. Some of the times, this communication's strategy is part of the whole procedure design<sup>159</sup>.

They are more interested in combining different architectural activities and events in order to communicate than limiting themselves to the pure architectural projects. They believe that the architectural project derived by a series of previous architectural activities (in the first sight alienated to architectural design but capable to contribute information) can be better, more coherent and more appropriate for the community. In a society like ours, where the diffusion of information is important as well as the innovation, the conceptual architectural brands have a bigger influence, with their capacity to transmit information about space and transform/alter the citizens' perception of architecture and its function, playing the card of the innovation.

Their principal preoccupation is the coherence in the production of architectural ideas that can reflect the reality and permit them to operate in this reality. They are very careful to create a persuasive conceptual framework that strengthen and underline the reflective and innovative part of their proposal. They create or participate frequently, for that reason, in various think-tanks, (inside or outside the universities, as it is AMO and t?f<sup>160</sup>) that can permit them to be

---

<sup>156</sup> See the studies for the global transactions at Rem Koolhaas, *Content*, Koln: ed. Taschen, 2004, 99 and *Ibid*, 102-103. Also the research on retail that Rem Koolhaas has conducted with his students at Harvard. See: C. J. Chung et al. (eds), *The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping / Harvard Design School Project on the City 2*, op. cit., 50-65.

<sup>157</sup> OMA's intention to work with structural engineers and other companies from the construction field is well-known from the first years of its existence. Rem Koolhaas explains a case: "*The simultaneous work in the summer of 1989 on these three competitions forced us to explore the potential of building big in Europe, with repercussions equally architectural and technical. The work became a joint campaign (OMA-Arup) to explore these freedoms for architecture and engineering, to reconquer the section, to address our shared discomfort with services..., to abolish the single grandiose solution integrating structure and services. It was also, more secretly, a search for ways to make buildings that would look completely different: for genuine newness*". See: Rem Koolhaas, "Last Apples" in Rem Koolhaas and Bru Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, New York: Taschen, 1995, 667-668.

<sup>158</sup> The role of the strategy in the conceptual architecture has been analyzed thoroughly at the article: Juan Antonio Cortes, "Delirious and More. II. Strategy vs. Architecture" in Fernando Marquez Cecilia and Richard Levene (eds.), "AMOMA - Rem Koolhaas [I] 1996-2006", *El Croquis* 131/132, Madrid: El Croquis Editorial (2006).

<sup>159</sup> A book that reflects the role of the communication strategy of an architectural office and shows the different factors that are implicated in the design procedure is: Rem Koolhaas, *Content*, Koln: ed. Taschen, 2004. For a researcher who is interested in this subject the above mentioned book can be a source of information.

<sup>160</sup> The Why Factory (t?f) is a joint initiative between MVRDV (Winy Maas) and Delft University. It is an educational initiative that has a postgraduate character but also functions as a think tank. See: *The Why Factory* [website], (2015) <<http://thewhyfactory.com/>>, accessed 15 May 2015. In their website we read: "*The Why Factory (T?F) is a global think-tank and research institute, run by MVRDV and Delft University of Technology and led by professor Winy Maas. It explores possibilities for the development of our cities by focusing on the production of models and visualisations for cities of the future. Education and research of The Why Factory are combined in a research lab and platform that aims to analyse, theorise and construct future cities. The Why Factory investigates within the given world and produces*



informed about the possible influences that the social changes have on architecture and to maintain their intellectual capacity for reflection.

#### **4.4.3. A third path. The sensational architecture and its constructed imaginary. (Herzog & De Meuron, Jean Nouvel).**

Important for research is the group of the architects that give emphasis at their work to the sensational part of architecture. The architects interested in producing a sensational architecture, well-known also as emotion-based architecture<sup>161</sup>. I mean all those successors of Barragan or Scarpa (in order to give some names) that pay attention (and want to reveal it at their architecture) to the effect that have at the human senses the colors, the texture of the materials or the contrast between light and shadow on architecture.

It is well-known that the architecture could not be understood just through the eyes and the majority of the senses participate at the perception of space. But it is also well-known that, in the contemporary, visual society (where the majority of the information that we perceive come through the architectural media and the internet), the vision is the principal (surely the prevalent if not the only) sense that gives us the necessary information to understand space. Against this mainstream opinion, those architects (who give importance to those elements of architecture that thrill the senses), have important role for our research, exactly because with their design methods can easily create a brand related to their architecture.

This group of architects is relatively small (in comparison with the formalist or the conceptual architects, to whom we have referred above) but quite dynamic, offering to the architectural community examples of architecture that attract our attention. For that reason, we have chosen to mention them in our research, in order to highlight a part of the brand's theory (and its possible implementation to architecture) which has to do with the perception of the senses.

Herzog and De Meuron is one architectural firm with successful trajectory in architecture (including a Prizker Award) which belongs to that group. Just some projects of them will make evident this argument. The Dominus winery (1995-1998), with the distinctive use of the stones at the façade, makes clear that the texture of the façade is important part of their design concept. The Museum of CaixaForum in Madrid (2001-2008), with the socking impression that the project makes through the uprooting of the existing building and its suspension in a higher level, through the peculiar and low space under the building, in the ground level, which makes the entrance and through the impressive rust of the metallic façade of the higher part

---

*future scenarios beyond it; from universal to specific and global to local. It proposes, constructs and envisions hypothetical societies and cities; from science to fiction and vice versa. The Why Factory thus acts as a future world scenario making machinery*.

<sup>161</sup> See: Stefano Casciani, "The risk of being modern. Interview with Jean Nouvel", *Domus* [website], (2010) <<http://www.domusweb.it/en/architecture/2010/05/30/the-risk-of-being-modern-interview-with-jean-nouvel.html>>, accessed 15 may 2015. There we read: "*Jean Nouvel, the intellectual who has best survived the crisis in modernity, speaks of his initiation into emotion-based architecture, proposes a manifesto of contextualisation, and discusses the need for and difficulty of depicting the spirit of the times – without forgetting politics*".

of the building, gives a new landmark at the Spanish capital, full of stimulations for the visitors' senses. We may say the same for their project at the Catalan capital, Barcelona, with the project of the Forum 2004 main Building (2000-2004), where the hard and rough surface of its façade, in combination with its peculiar color (gives the name to the new Natural Science Museum: *Museu Blau*), attracts the attention of the visitors and maybe is the more characteristic part of its design.

The shapes that they use in order to organize their architecture are austere and well-articulated, something that brings them nearer to the conceptual architecture, since they are not particularly interested in the creation of a form with peculiar characteristics. The sensational architects are also near to the conceptual architects for one more reason. Some of their central choices are conceptual ones. Such is the idea of uprooting the existing building in Madrid's Museum of CaixaForum or, as we will see later, the design of the Arab World Institute, where the ground floor is so short in height, in order to give the impression of an intermediate space, a space in-between that has as a principal aim to mark the entrance and to bring nearer the mass of the building to its visitor's eyes. What determines the distance from the conceptual architecture is, in one hand, the use of the surface, not as a shape/form, but as a texture, and in the other hand, the creation of circumstances that are unexpected and for that reason, are stimulating for the senses (for example, the space under the Museum of CaixaForum in Madrid).

The chosen materials, their roughness, the contrasts of light and shadow that they create, the natural colors that they contains, the reflections, even the use of materials with more symbolic qualities (as it is the use of water on the top of the Forum 2004 Building, in order to maintain the ecological character of the area that historically had) are some basic elements that distinct them from the other architects (constitute a type of brand) and consist a decisive tool for their design. What becomes obvious from the above comments is the fact that the architecture of the sensational architects acquires value when it is constructed. The ideas that create the projects (and are related to the effect that the building can have at the human senses) can be understood mainly when the project, constructed, can be visited and experienced by the observer, or, at least, can be photographed under the sun.

Here lies the big difference between the sensational architecture on the one hand, and the conceptual and formalist architecture, on the other. The conceptual architecture can be understood even at the condition of the project, since the key element of the project, the concept, can be perfectly explained through diagrams or the conventional architectural representation tools. The formalist architecture can highlight the importance of the form through the models or the drawings, since the dynamic of the form can be represented and transmitted by representations in scale. The sensational architecture requires the human presence in a real space in order to give the real impression for which it was designed.

I would like to stay a little more at the term of the "impression", since that is directly related to the essence of the sensational architecture. Up to now, we have commented the role of the materials and the influence that they have on the human senses. We have highlighted the importance of that influence. As we have seen from the above mentioned projects (and we will see also later) the materials indeed play a crucial (we may say principal) role at the development of the sensational architecture. But it is not the only. Impression can not only

create the materials at the microscale, but the space (existed and manipulated or new one) at the architectural scale, under specific conditions. I refer, for example, to the Entrance Hall, with its magnificent height, of the Tate Modern (an existing space, redesigned, converted from the turbines hall of an old power station to the main entrance and a space for temporary exhibitions and performances), a work of Herzog and de Meuron. Or to the ground floor of the Museum of CaixaForum in Madrid and the ground floor of the Arab World Institute. The impression, in all those cases, it is created through the impact that the designed space has on the observer.

In the same direction (of the sensational architecture<sup>162</sup>), in order to give one more examples, goes the work of Jean Nouvel. Important for him is the impression that his work gives to its visitors. If we bring in mind one of his first well-known projects, the Arab World Institute<sup>163</sup> (1981-1987) and especially the low (in height) ground floor, from where the entrance is and the special feeling (of the protected and, at the same time, squeezed space) that he wanted to give, we can understand how important the senses are (and what we perceive from them) for the design procedure of that French architect.

In the upper level, the technology of the façade (pioneer for that time), tries to control the light (simulating the aesthetics of the Arabic façade) and, at the same time, to impress the visitors. The building for the Cartier Foundation also is a good example in order to understand the principles of the Nouvel's design. A building made of glass, entirely transparent, reveals the inside activity and at the same time attracts the senses: the walls reflect the surroundings, the building plays with the light (of the sun and the artificial one). Again here he uses the latest technology in order to influence at the visitor's perception.

Two more projects of Jean Nouvel can verify this argument. The first is the Agbar Headquarters in Barcelona. The main characteristic of this project is the pixelized façade with predominant color the blue. Aim of the Nouvel's design was to feature the water (since the Agbar Corporation is the responsible company for the administration of the water in the Catalan capital) and the refractions that it has. Again we see at the Agbar Headquarters<sup>164</sup> that the projection to the façade of the impression that the water gives to our vision is one of the main design decisions.

The second project can be one of his latest, the Louvre Museum in Abu Dhabi, where characteristic is the way that the light enters from the perforated dome and conditions the

---

<sup>162</sup> Jean Nouvel argues: "*In this sense, architecture can be a way of channelling sensations just like writing, painting and sculpture. As I always say, you just need to "answer a question that is never asked". What do we transmit beyond the project itself? All that lies in the realm of emotions, the transferral of important contemporary issues by means of expressive sensitivity. Our work generates a kind of container, a womb of feelings and emotions, a mother of arts that can contain other artistic disciplines. In this respect architecture can be considered an art*". See: Stefano Casciani, "The risk of being modern. Interview with Jean Nouvel", *Domus* [website], (2010) <<http://www.domusweb.it/en/architecture/2010/05/30/the-risk-of-being-modern-interview-with-jean-nouvel.html>>, accessed 15 may 2015.

<sup>163</sup> See: Nouvel, Jean and Tonka, Hubert, *Institut du monde arabe: une architecture de Jean Nouvel*, Gilbert Lezenes, Pierre Soria, *Architecture Studio*, Paris : Editions du Demi-Cercle, 1990.

<sup>164</sup> Carolina B. Garcia wrote an interesting article with aim to explain the Agbar Headquarters. There we read: "*A scenographic transparency, nocturnal, related to the world of the ephemeral perceptions. A selective transparence, capable to hide what it can't do or what should not be seen*". See: Carolina B. Garcia, "Ceci n'est pas une tour: Jean Nouvel en Barcelona, el caso Agbar (1999-2005)", *DC PAPERS, revista de crítica y teoría de la arquitectura* 19-20 (2010), 152

feeling of space. The Copenhagen Concert Hall is another building of Jean Nouvel which follows a clear sensational approach, quite near to the impression that the Agbar Headquarters produces at night.

Jean Nouvel, besides of a very good architect, he is an intellectual<sup>165</sup> interested in analyzing the society and the world of ideas, in working in-between architecture and philosophy. We see this part of his profile to be revealed through a jointed book ("*The singular objects*"<sup>166</sup>) that he had made with Jean Baudrillard. In that book<sup>167</sup>, with the form of a conversation, they discuss the nature of architecture and the current state of society. Through that book we can see his opinions on architecture and the reasons (the background) that exist and justify his sensational architecture approach.

In order to come back to the broader picture and speaking for all the architects that belong to this category, it is important to investigate the relationship of the architecture that they create with their personal architectural signature. At the conceptual architecture we have seen a direct and personal relationship between the concept and the architect, since the concept has been filtered through the architect's personal approach. For example, we have spoken about the "displacement of the concept" at the work of Rem Koolhaas. That displacement was conditioned by the Koolhaas' personal approach of the initial concept. At the formalist architecture we have seen the direct relationship between the architect and his created form. For example, in the case of Miralles, the geometry that defines his forms is specific and in this way he achieves that the observer will unequivocally associate them with him. What happens at the case of the sensational architects?

---

<sup>165</sup> Carolina B, Garcia helps us to understand the theoretical background of Jean Nouvel (with references to writers, thinkers and architects) and also reveals the content of his architectural thinking through the citation of fragments from the book "*Singular Objects*" at which Jean Nouvel was co-author, comparing them with the architectural decisions that Nouvel had made at the design of Agbar Headquarters in Barcelona. Ibid., 145-172.

<sup>166</sup> See: Jean Baudrillard and Jean Nouvel, *Los objetos singulares: arquitectura y filosofía*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2002.

<sup>167</sup> An interesting review of that book we can see at: Kim Diorio, "The Singular Objects of Architecture by Jean Baudrillard and Jean Nouvel", *Popmatters* [website]. (13 Aug. 2003) <<http://www.popmatters.com/review/singular-objects-of-architecture/>>, accessed 15 May 2015.

"*The loose focus of Nouvel and Baudrillard's discussion is the "singular object": an irreducible, irreplaceable, transcendent cultural artifact. Both Nouvel and Baudrillard believe that singular architectural objects are of the utmost importance, and they agree that any building that ignores the culture, time, and space where it resides, whether to please its owners or conform to conventions, cannot be singular. While examples of non-singularity in architecture are abundant and obvious (e.g.: cookie-cutter colonial style suburban homes, or Asian skyscrapers that replicate existing American buildings), identifying a singular object is a bit more difficult. One exception is the World Trade Center, which—according to Nouvel and Baudrillard—was a singular object even before its horrific collapse, since it translated the hyper-real, almost post-apocalyptic climate of New York City through its verticality, while also hinting at the biological and metaphorical role of cloning in contemporary society through its duality*". Ibid., para. 5.

"*Although the idea of "singularity" might seem unimportant to those not interested in architecture, the deeper philosophical concept at work beneath this notion holds universal appeal. Baudrillard calls this concept the "secret" and believes that it resides at the center of all great art. This secret—much like the singular object—is difficult to describe and, in contemporary society, has dissipated. Baudrillard says: "...the secret obviously becomes increasingly difficult in a world like our own, where everything is given to us totally promiscuously, so that there are no gaps, no voids, no nothingness; nothingness no longer exists, and nothingness is where secrecy happens, the place where things lose their meaning, their identity—not only would they assume all possible meanings here, but they would remain truly unintelligible in some sense*". Ibid., para 6.

*J. Nouvel, Louvre Museum in Abu Dhabi*



*J. Nouvel, Arab World Institute in Paris*



Those architects can be criticized for a lot of things at their design choices, but we may argue that they are very consistent at their choice to leave out their personal signature. Raphael Moneo, commenting the work of Herzog and de Meuron, asserts: “*The rejection of iconography also carried with it the rejection of any architecture that could be interpreted as a mere venting of the individual. Hence, we find no personal gestures in the work of Herzog & de Meuron. It does not have a formal stamp of [any] kind. (..) In times of democratic massification, architecture [of Herzog and de Meuron] ceases to be a property of the individual, it ceases to be personal, to become instead a mere object of reflection and a harmless, inert frame for action*”<sup>168</sup>. The thesis believes that the above mentioned argument can be applied also to Jean Nouvel and to the majority of the sensational architects.

The architectural imaginary, in this case, is directly related to the impression that the building creates at the observer. Since there is not a personal gesture at the work of the majority of the sensational architects, we cannot find a design element that it is repeated, in order to create continuity and a direct interrelation between the architect and his architectural production.

Under these circumstances does the architectural imaginary lose its role? No, should be the response, since there can be found a method (a design strategy) that is repeated in various projects of the sensational architects and constitutes their imaginary. This method (strategy) [or combined methods] is the particular use of the material, no matter if they use different material in each project. In order to be clearer, a sensational architect may use a different material as primary one in each project (for example, wood at the Ricola Warehouse<sup>169</sup> of Herzog and de Meuron, and concrete at the Forum 2004 central building, of the same architects) [that means that the material is not a personal signature, as it is the concrete at Carlos Ferrater’s architecture], the common thing is the common strategy that he employs in order to use the material. (For example, the use of the material for the creation of rhythm and the effect that this rhythm gives, in the case of the Ricola Warehouse projects (1987) and in various other projects of Herzog and de Meuron).

So, in the case of the sensational architects the method (design strategy) for the use of the material is the main element of the imaginary that can connect their various projects.

#### **4.5. The pure brand: Jean Nouvel. A star-architect without an office.**

Jean Nouvel the last years works differently. He prefers not to use for some of his projects the heavy structure of an architectural office, where a multitude of architects was occupied for the whole design processes (with all the obligations that such a structure has) and to delegate part of the work to other offices of younger architects with whom in the past has collaborated and additionally to have local partners. Furthermore, part of the design (which needs a specialized approach) is given to specialized architectural offices that offer him services. This permits him to keep the creative and decisive part of the design (at least in the general level)

<sup>168</sup> R. Moneo, *Theoretical anxiety and design strategies*, op. cit., 364.

<sup>169</sup> More for the project at: *Ibid.*, 375-376

for himself and to give parts of the work (for example, the plans of execution) to the collaborative offices.

Already in the past he has delegated part of the design. In the design of Agbar Headquarters in Barcelona, the structural decisions were taken (almost completely) by BOMA SA (Brufau/Obiol/Moya & Asociados SA), the local associate architect (b720 Arquitectura) assumed great part of the local responsibility, mainly related to the administrative part, and the façade (so important for the concept of the whole project) was designed in details and executed by Ferres Arquitectos y Consultores (Xavier Ferres). In a way, we can understand that the part of the project (structural engineering, façade design, administration procedures) which can be conceived as services<sup>170</sup> was delegated to other architects or engineers and Jean Nouvel has kept the most creative part, the part of the project that is more related to the brand strategy. That means, he dedicated his time and effort at the decision of the project's architectural elements that are part of his architectural imaginary and how those (through the design procedure) can be developed in order to design an architectural project coherent with his brand strategy.

Of course Jean Nouvel is not the only one<sup>171</sup>. A lot of architectural offices follow the same strategy, especially when they were dealing with "specialized matters". We just use Jean Nouvel as an example of reference, because maybe he had pushed this tendency to its limits, just designing and controlling the DNA of his projects, the basic directives for the development of the projects and the most important conditions that he wants to take place inside his buildings (for example, the impressions that he want the visitors to have). In other words, to control all those things that can be included and described by a sketch<sup>172</sup>. Of course, he keeps for himself the managerial tasks, related to the promotion of his projects (exhibitions, lectures, public relations, new commissions) and of his brand.

This reality possibly will make us think that Jean Nouvel is an architectural brand by excellence. By delegating big parts of the projects' procedures (which have the characteristics of services) he keeps for himself the more decisive part of the brand making, the construction of the imaginary, the DNA of the project. All the other architectural offices that try to control

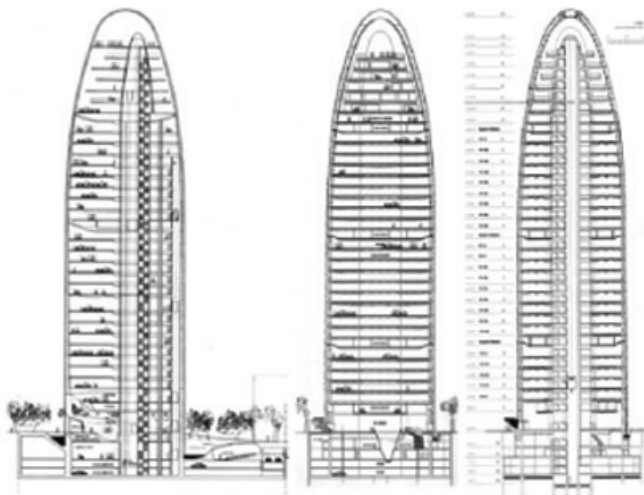
---

<sup>170</sup> Interesting is the fact that we come back to the dipole *services* and *brands* through the assignment procedure that we investigate in architecture. In the architectural design and the development of a project, as we have seen already, co-exist procedures that are more near to the services and other procedures which have brand characteristics. As the architectural strategies are mixed (containing service and brand strategies), the same happens to the character of the multiple procedures which are parts of the project's development or its construction. It seems that in the more advanced cases, the architectural brands have decided: a) to maintain in their offices the design procedures that are related to their brand strategies (those that have brand character, are decisive for the effective design of the project and can ensure the continuity of their brand's imaginary). And b) to control the procedures that are more service oriented by delegating them to other offices.

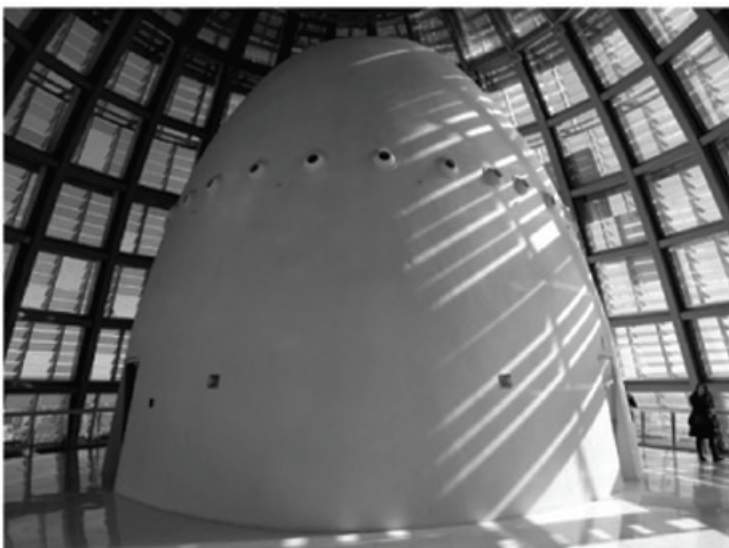
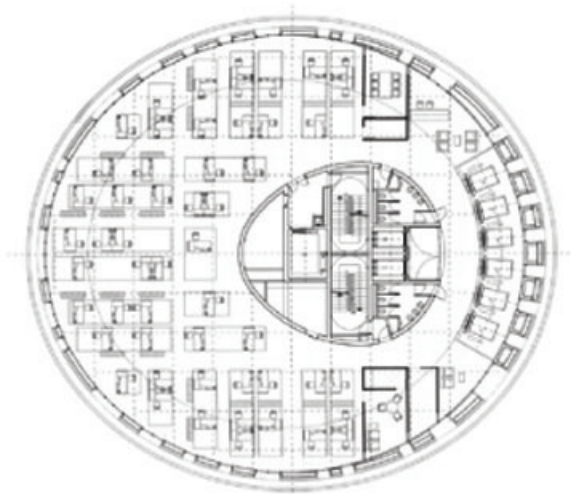
<sup>171</sup> The assignment of part of the architectural design to external collaborators is not something new. The big architectural offices frequently delegate to other offices (which are brand too, in some of the cases) the structural engineering, for example. Arup is well-known basically through its collaboration with architects at several projects. The same happens for the façade' design or the mechanical engineering. The last years we have seen a type of assignment at the subject of the interior design or the landscape design that affects the broader project.

<sup>172</sup> We have referred to the role of the slogans (those compact phrases that contain all the characteristics of the brand). The sketch can be the analogue in architecture. The sketch can contain (in a compact form) all the important elements of an architectural idea. In the present context in which we use the sketch as a reference, the sketch can be conceived as the visual slogan of the architectural brand. And in the case of Jean Nouvel, the sketch is his most important and powerful tool.

*J. Nouvel, Agbar Headquarters in Barcelona*







*J. Nouvel, Agbar Headquarters  
in Barcelona*

and design everything inside their team may follow brand strategies (in order to have a coherent content that transversally connects all their projects, giving continuity and the sensation of unity) but also are obliged to maintain, at the same time, service procedures<sup>173</sup>, such as whatever has to do with the administrative part of the projects. Contrary to that mixed condition, which the majority of the architectural offices has [trying to contain various parallel procedures, some of them brand procedures (e.g. design), some others of services (e.g. administrative ones)], Jean Nouvel seems to reach, more than the others, the pure brand condition. Paying the necessary price, of course: to lose the absolute control of the final result.

#### **4.6. Case study: Agbar Headquarters versus GasNatural Headquarters in Barcelona. The distinctive role of the architectural design.**

In the previous chapters we have commented on the impact that the city-branding's methods may have on the contemporary architectural projects and additionally we have explained the appearance of a new architectural figure, the brand architect, who is involved in the process of the city-branding through their architectural projects. We have shown that this procedure several times leads to a new type of architectural project, the building-icon. In this chapter we will like to show that the design of those buildings-icons can follow different strategies and the final result may vary a lot (according to the architect's capacity to generate an interesting form or a strong concept and the building's relationship with the surrounding urban environment). In other words, with the follow comparison of two recent buildings (with the character of the contemporary landmark) in Barcelona, we aim to show (as we intended to explain in the previous chapter) that not all the buildings-icons belong to the superficial and arrogant architecture of the last decade, that there is a big diversification (with better and worse projects) and that some of them have a high quality that may give them a respectable place in the contemporary architectural history. So, and in the design level, we can find out different models and design strategies with different impacts. It is not objective to put all the architectural projects designed to be buildings-icons in the same category. In order to explain better this argument we will refer to two very characteristic buildings-icons of Barcelona: the Agbar Headquarters<sup>174</sup> and the Gas Natural Headquarters<sup>175</sup>.

As the cities compete between themselves, the same happens with the big corporations and companies. They use the architecture, in order to express their economical condition and their predominant position in the Mass Society, with the same way that the cities use the

---

<sup>173</sup> Maintaining service procedures normally is economically inefficient. It costs a lot and for that, in many cases, the companies try to outsource them. So, for an architectural brand, besides of the fact that its brand character is been altered (by maintaining some service procedures related to the architectural production in its office's activity), it has as a result a financial burden.

<sup>174</sup> For a thorough analysis of Jean Nouvel's project, see the article: Carolina B. García, "Ceci n'est pas une tour: Jean Nouvel en Barcelona, el caso Agbar (1999-2005)", *DC PAPERS, revista de crítica y teoría de la arquitectura* 19-20 (2010), 145-172.

<sup>175</sup> For an analysis of Miralles' project, see the article: Carolina B. García, "Lo solido no se disuelve en el aire. Edificio de Gas Natural, 1999-2008", *DC PAPERS, revista de crítica y teoría de la arquitectura* 17-18 (2009), 205-230.

architectural projects in their own competition. Some local Barcelonan examples are the Agbar and the Gas Natural companies. Both of them have chosen recently to use brand architects<sup>176</sup> to construct their headquarters. Do those buildings work in the same way?

Both buildings are creating a specific image and can be characterized as buildings-icons. Both of them form a physical expression of economic power that has been projected through their size, basically their height. But they are sharing differences. The Agbar Headquarters has no relationship with its urban environment<sup>177</sup>. The Gas Natural Headquarters intends to communicate with its surroundings<sup>178</sup>, bridging the scale-difference between the local neighborhood behind it and the high-speed road, in front of it. The Agbar Headquarters has based its design in a concept strategy: it is a building-object<sup>179</sup>; contrary to the Gas Natural Headquarters, which shapes a special micro-environment<sup>180</sup>. The Gas Natural Headquarters is more a building-icon than a building-object, with its strict meaning. According to the report of the Gas Natural Headquarters' competition, the jury had evaluated positively "*the invention of a new type of high-rise building, the experimentation, the power of the evocative image that*

---

<sup>176</sup> Jean Nouvel received the project as a commission. Interesting information about the procedure and the content of the meeting in the restaurant "La Balsa" of Barcelona in 1996, between Jean Nouvel, Santiago Mercadé, Fermin Vazquez and Michel Pelissier (general director of Agbar) you can find at the article: C. B. García, "Ceci n'est pas une tour", op. cit., 148.

On the contrary, Enric Miralles and his team participated in a closed architectural competition which he won. The architects that had participated in that competition are renowned Catalan architects, who can be considered as local brand architects. More information for the procedure in the article: C. B. García, "Lo solido no se disuelve en el aire », op. cit., 207.

<sup>177</sup> Carolina García analyzes the relationship of Agbar Headquarters with its urban environment and comments: "*It was, among others, Manuel Delgado who has denounced autism and lack of urban dialogue with its surroundings in the case of buildings as the Agbar Tower or the Forum building of Herzog & De Meuron. Something that does not seem to fit with previous urban policies of Barcelona after the idea of the new centrality was abandoned. Both buildings, regardless of the political discourses based on historic monumentality, seem to no understand the history of the place*". See: C. B. García, "Ceci n'est pas une tour", op. cit., 168.

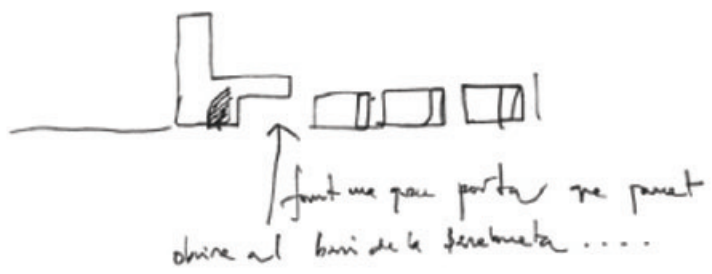
<sup>178</sup> The incorporation of the Gas Natural Headquarters into the neighborhood of La Barceloneta was part of the competition guidelines. Enric Miralles has succeeded to fulfill the requirements of the competition, putting the lower part of the complex near to the Barceloneta's neighbourhood. On the contrary, he locates the taller part of the complex near to the Ronda Litoral (the speedway) in order to oppose to the intensity of the traffic. Information for the Miralles' approach towards the Barceloneta's neighbourhood can be found at: C. B. García, "Lo solido no se disuelve en el aire », op. cit., 208.

<sup>179</sup> An interesting story that explains that the proposal has (from its origin) a building-object character can be found at the article of Carolina B. García. She narrates from the above mentioned meeting in the "La Balsa" restaurant: "*It is, at this moment, when Nouvel, after the proposal of the triangular towers, presents a third option, pulling from the pocket of his jacket one Montecristo Number 2, el cigar that habitually smoked Mies, and continues: 'But my favorite proposal is this' and he places the cigar into an upright position. A surprised Santiago Mercadé urged him: 'Explain yourself, please'. And the architect concluded: 'I want the building to have this form of campanile, with circular plan, cylindrical trunk and a mildly edgy finish. I think evokes the temple's towers of the Gaudi's Sagrada Familia, also the stone moles of Montserrat. And I'm sure it can become a citizen's icon*". See: C. B. García, "Ceci n'est pas une tour", op. cit., 148.

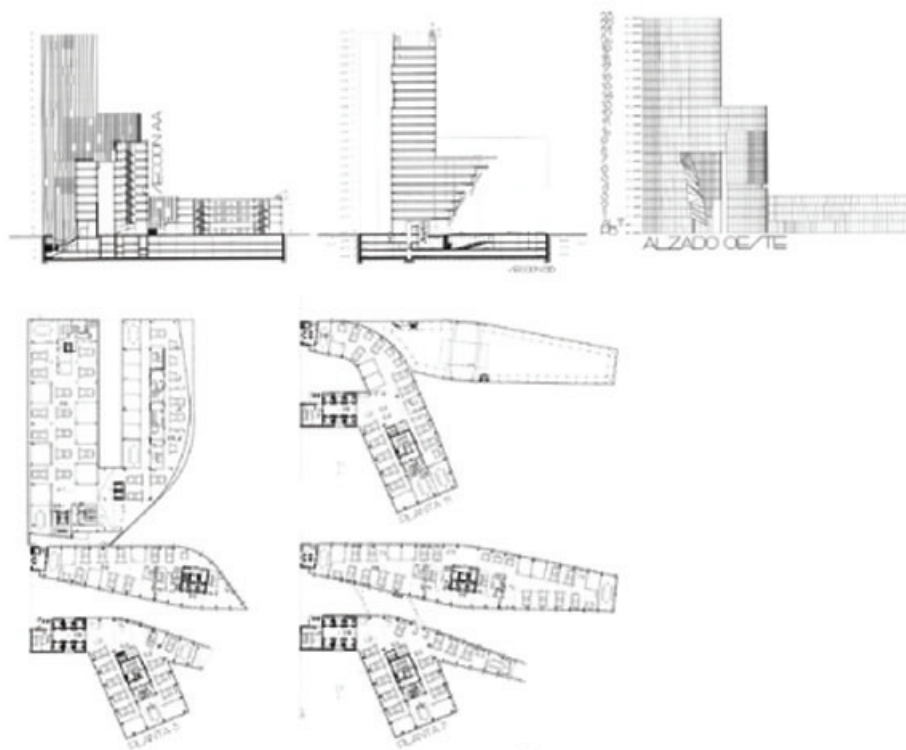
<sup>180</sup> The project can be considered as an attempt to create a micro-environment, since the architects intent to incorporate different scales in the project (in a dialogue with constructions or forces in the surrounding that have different scales). Additionally, it is part of the architectural practice of Miralles' architectural office to fragment the general volume into smaller pieces.

In the project description we read: "*So we have made a proposal where its interest lies in the fragmentation of the constructed volume into a series of buildings [...] forming a great door that allows to open to the Barceloneta's district*". See: Enric Miralles, "New headquarters of Gas Natural" in Fernando Marquez Cecilia and Richard Levene (eds.), "Enric Miralles-Benedetta Tagliabue, 1996-2000", *El Croquis* 100/101, Madrid: El Croquis Editorial (2000), 288.

*E. Miralles/EMBT, Gas Natural Headquarters in Barcelona.  
The below sketch shows the main concept of the project and its  
relationship with the surroundings*



*E. Miralles/EMBT, plans and sections for the Gas Natural Headquarters in Barcelona*



*proposed Miralles' project*<sup>181</sup>. The Agbar Headquarters' design creates a mega-approach; it uses the same construction details, without an intention to differentiate its parts. The Gas Natural Headquarters' design has a micro-approach, with small differences and imperfections that intent to give a smaller scale to the whole project.

From this comparison we can see that different design strategies can be applied with the same objective: To strengthen the image of those corporations, to highlight physically their power, to become landmarks in the urban landscape. Seen the two aforementioned architectural projects from a distant critical point of view, we can incorporate them in the same category of architectural projects that are interested in the creation of an easily exported (and diffused) architectural image. But as architects we should focus on the question how those two strategies with apparently small differences in the approach of the image-making of the contemporary economical actors (the corporations), can have big (in some cases chaotic) differences in the spatial and urban situations that they propose.

Under this point of view, we can understand that the current reality implicates the architecture in the construction of the city-branding through an architectural design that uses a specific design, in order to create the necessary imaginary. This doesn't imply that the architectural quality is the same. The architectural quality in the design of the architectural projects is related more to the capacity of the responsible architect to create forms based on concepts and ideas that to give solutions to the questions/problems/needs/expectations raised by the project. To make a long story short, the architectural quality is related to the broader architectural capacity of the contracted architect(s). For that reason, we have examples from the recent architectural history and also from the present architectural activity, which show that an architectural project can be attractive (with terms of city-branding), play the role of the city's landmark and, at the same time, be donated with high architectural quality, contributing with new ideas and qualitative spaces to the architectural dialogue.

#### **4.7. The other scales 1. The competition of the cities and the role of the architectural brands through their architectural projects. Architectural brands and city-branding.**

It is well known that the cities compete between themselves in order to attract people and capitals. We should be more precise explaining that the cities compete between themselves in order to attract tourists, talents and funds for investments. The first factor, the tourism is one of the most important sources of income in the Metropolises, especially based on the touristic phenomenon "city-brake", the weekend tourism that is interested in the urban life and the urban culture (museums, football matches, shopping, the way of living in the Metropolis, etc). The aim of the cities to attract the talents is something that hasn't been analyzed so

---

<sup>181</sup> See: C. B. García, "Lo solido no se disuelve en el aire », op. cit., 207. There we can read: "*For the EMBT's proposal we can highlight that 'it constitutes a commitment to the future, an attempt at inventing a new type of high-rise building, vary representative which, at the same time, provides high quality public spaces [...] it is a commitment to the unprecedented architecture and to the experimentation, an attempt that can be positive for the company and for the city to enjoy an architectural work so powerful and evocative*".

much up to now, but the books of Richard Florida (especially “The rise of the creative class”<sup>182</sup>) has shown the importance of the presence of talents (in high-technology, in sports or in art/culture) in the cities as a key factor of differentiation. [At least, the 22@ project<sup>183</sup> in Barcelona<sup>184</sup> in the beginning of 2000 or the more recent aim of a Smart City, again from the Catalan capital, are projects that move towards that direction]. To attract the capital is also one of the first priorities of the Cities, especially after the collapse of the direct finance from the central governments after the crisis. The cities have to look after for alternative financing resources and the private funds can be one of them. [Focusing in urbanism, the example of the development of the Forum Area in Barcelona falls in this category]. In order to achieve the above and attract the aforementioned target-groups, the Cities, especially the Metropolises, should look after their image; that means the projection that they have towards the world and what information they send to the rest of the Global Community.

It is not actually a new phenomenon. In the history of the humanity the cities always were representing the power and the dynamic of the state. For that reason, from the antiquity, the countries and their leaders were investing in buildings and public spaces at the capital cities, with aim to show the grandeur of the nation. One of the recent cases was the “*grand projet*” of Fransua Mitterrand with the intention, through big architectural and urban projects, to underline the new economical and political condition of the French State and its capacity to renew its image through the renovation of its capital city. The instrument for the projection, towards the rest of the world, of the new political and economical power of the French State<sup>185</sup>

---

<sup>182</sup> See: Richard Florida, *The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life*, New York: Basic Books, 2002. In that book, Richard Florida intends to explain the economic development in the last decades through the creative class (artists, scientists, educator, thinkers, writers, engineers, etc), highlighting that it is the driving force for entrepreneurial activities, innovation and economic growth. According to the author, the creative class chooses to move and live at regions that favor a specific way of life, open to the creativity and the interchange of ideas. He explains what the members of the creative class are looking for: “*abundant, highquality amenities, an openness to diversity of all kinds, and above all else the opportunity to validate their identities as creative people*”. Ibid, 219. This book is very important for the understanding of the talents’ role in the contemporary society and, as a consequence, for their role in the development of the cities and the function of the city-branding.

Some years later, and following the success of that first book, he wrote another with title: “*Who’s your city?*”, which has as an aim to focus on the cities and explain how they are influenced by the creative class. See: Florida, Richard, *Who’s your city?*, New York: Basic Books, 2006.

<sup>183</sup> Important information can be found in the respective website. See: Ajuntament de Barcelona, “22@Barcelona”, *22 @Barcelona* [website], (2015), <<http://www.22barcelona.com/>>, accessed 15 May 2015.

<sup>184</sup> In this chapter, in order to achieve a better cohesion of its content, the thesis had chosen to use examples from Barcelona. In this way, there can be an interrelation of the presented examples, we remain in the same cultural, political and economical environment and help us to create a continuity with the next chapter.

<sup>185</sup> The projects that were designed and constructed in Paris under the Mitterrand’s plan are interesting case studies in order to investigate: a) the relationship of a capital city with its state and b) how the projects realized at the capital city influence the image of the state. Of course the Mitterrand’s plan didn’t have as an aim simply the upgrade of the Paris’ image. Through the Paris’ refreshed image, the principal aim was the whole France, as descendant state of a glorious empire, to revive its past glory. To show that France still has the capacity and the strength to construct ambitious urban interventions. We can see that, for example, at the two most important projects of La Villette’s competition. Those of Tschumi and Koolhaas. Both of them had as a basic aim to show the French modern dynamism. At the Mitterrand’s plan, the architecture and the urban design were the vehicle to achieve this aim. The relationship of the capital city with its state is stronger in the cases of the centralized states (such as France) or in cases where historical reasons impose a strong interrelationship between the city and its broader territory (see Barcelona and Catalunya). The city branding do take account of this strong

(in the programs of Fransua Mitterrand for the 20th century) is the same with the past: big public architectural and urban projects that can (with their innovation and their new functions) compete with the other Metropolises of the world.

Although the intention is the same, the methods have changed after the predominance of the Mass Society. The prevalence of the capitalistic model in the economy and the implication of the private sector in the development of the contemporary cities, in correlation with the implication of the management techniques in the organization of the cities, have led to a new model for the promotion of the Metropolises, well-known with the term: "city-branding"<sup>186</sup>. Maybe the term is most associated with the brand theory that relates the management of a place (*spatial management*) with its promotion. Aim of this promotion method is to use all the dynamic cultural, economical and social components of the city in order to create an attractive imaginary that can attract human and economical capital and at the same time to make the city competitive against other cities.

The unfolding of the Mass Society and the consolidation of its organizational structure has changed obviously the way that the (big) cities were projected onto the world. Now aim is not only to attract the interest of the private global economic sector. Aim is also to create a good image/impression at the global public opinion. And the reason is obvious. The Mass Society has given to its members-citizens bigger purchasing power and capacity to buy more products/services (as a necessity to nourish the market and to push it towards an upper level of capitalistic efficiency). That, in correlation with the capacity for greater mobility of the contemporary citizens and the development of the communication channels, has created an unprecedented figure, the tourist.

The touristic phenomenon<sup>187</sup> is one of the few new human activities that have appeared in the contemporary era as a direct product of the Mass Society. And acquires all the characteristics of the aforementioned Society: massiveness, changefulness, flexibility, variability,

---

relationship and uses strategies, through which, by promoting the city achieves a parallel promotion of the state.

<sup>186</sup> The city-branding is the procedure, through which we give brand characteristics to the city. The noun (city-branding) is also used in order to express the brand of the city, the content of its identity. [The city-branding imaginary is the imaginary that the city wants to emit to the world]. This indiscriminatory use of the word may in some cases confuse, but it is crucial to mention it, in order to pay specific attention.

<sup>187</sup> The research organization "*Intelligent Coast*", leded by Manuel Gausa, Luis Falcon and Silvia Banchini had made an excellent work during the last decade in the investigation of the tourism' role in the development of the cities and the coastal zones. All the information from that research can be found at: Intelligent Coast Group, "Intelligent and Knowledge", *Intelligent Coast* [website], (2015) <<http://www.intelligentcoast.com/>>, accessed 15 May 2015.

In this framework, they have investigated a central part of Barcelona, Las Ramblas, and have shown how important they are for the Barcelona's tourist model. The investigation was conducted through the project "*Multiramblas: Barcelona 6T*". The 6T approach (as its name indicates) has to do with 6 factors that starts with T: Territory, Tourism, Time, Technology, Talent and Tolerance. According to their research, the aforementioned factors are crucial for the development of the city and a successful city-branding. As they comment: "*Multiramblas, Barcelona 6 "T"s is a research that aims to rethink, firstly, the role of La Rambla in Barcelona as tourist "trademark", and secondly as space with a strong role on the urban identity of the entire city. The research aims to critically reflect on the future of a crucial historic civic center within the existing urban structure: La Rambla. The project is developed on three structural parts: Analysis of the elements of competitiveness and excellence of the city of Barcelona, critical diagnosis on the current role of La(s) Rambla(s) and preliminary studies of opportunities, projects and actions, for the future development of the area*". See: Intelligent Coast Group, "Case Studies", *Intelligent Coast* [website], (2009) <<http://www.intelligentcoast.com/clients.php>>, para. 7, accessed 15 May 2015.



unpredictability, and agility. One of the main cities' incomes is derived from tourism, an activity with a transversal distribution of the revenue to the majority of the economical and social sectors of the society. Under this new reality, the cities try to create a better and more desirable image and to project it to the citizens of the world. This fact has revolutionized the methods of promoting the city.

Now attractive destination is the compact<sup>188</sup>, complex and dynamic city that permits the combinations of different activities: shopping with swimming, participating in congresses with visiting museums, doing sports with clubbing etc. The complexity of the combinations makes the city more attractive as a touristic destination and the role of "city-branding" is exactly to promote the possible combinations of activities that can take place in that city. For that reason the "city-branding" is related directly with the branding techniques that we have analyzed in the 3.1. chapter and is one of the few completely updated branding techniques, synchronized with the most recent expressive forms of the Mass Society.

The last decades, more or less in the majority of the big western cities, we can observe a characteristic phenomenon: The sources of the financing for the architectural and urban projects (realized in the cities with advanced capitalistic economic background) has moved from the public sector to a mixed sector created by public and private funds. That means that joint ventures (with a mixed character from public and private sector) have taken the place of the public sector which was functioning alone in the previous decades as the urban projects' investor. A paradigm is the urban renewal of Forum area in Barcelona. The strategy of the city to impulse a joint inversion of the private and the public sector has as an aim to attract the global capital and to animate the human capital<sup>189</sup> (innovative and high-educated professionals) to come to work in that city. The goal was to increase the dynamism and the diversity of the city and to "put the city in the map" of the leading metropolises of the world. In this new era, the change of the investors' composition (from purely public to a mixed public-private joint ventures) obviously has changed the projects' aims, the aesthetics of the interventions, the program uses and the economic level of the new residents.

On the other hand, this collaboration is inevitable, if the city (the city-government<sup>190</sup> and the citizens) accepts the current globalized capitalistic system, which, inside the general ideology of competition, imposes the competition of the cities. If the city accepts to play with the rules of the current system, the collaboration of the private and the public sector seems inevitable, because the funds originated from the public sector are limited and the competition between the cities is every year harder and costs more. This competition, related to the "city-branding"

---

<sup>188</sup> At the book "*Barcelona: The Urban Evolution of a Compact City*" of Joan Busquets, we have seen that a compact city can be attractive, apart from being efficient. See: Joan Busquets Grau, *Barcelona: The Urban Evolution of a Compact City*, Rovereto, Italy and Cambridge, Mass.: Nicolodi and Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 2005.

<sup>189</sup> The aim to attract the human capital has been made evident through the decision to incorporate at the Forum 2004 project the education sector. A second campus of UPC (The Campus Diagonal Besos) has been designed there, very near to the 22@ area.

<sup>190</sup> There are some changes recently at the composition of the city-governments in some Mediterranean cities that brought to the decisive administrative positions new people with new perceptions for the city and the way that it should function. It will be extremely interesting, from the point of view of the city-branding, to see which changes would be made and in which extend those changes will transform the content of the city-branding.

demands new inversion<sup>191</sup>, which can come, under the current conditions, primary from the private sector. This situation makes the relationship of the private sector with the “city-branding” (and its content) very close. The entry of the private interest in the creation of public space [either speaking literally (the real public space of the city) or metaphorically (the public sphere)] has made some significant changes in the content of those spaces and also in the branding of the cities (the message that they transmit). As it can be obvious, more emphasis has been given (if we focus to the real public space of the city) to the capacity of those new spaces to be photogenic and attractive for tourists and the global capital. In order those new spaces to be created, a cause is needed. The cause, most of the time is a city-event<sup>192</sup>, which either exists as an organization and the city aims to host it or is something that should be invented.

The shift of the economic power from the public sector to the private one had made some changes in the “panorama” of the contemporary city (basically the last two decades). Progressively it had changed the landmarks (the attractors) of a city. Previously were public or religious buildings that had the leading role. With the years (at least the last two decades), landmarks of the cities had become the buildings of private interest (cultural institutions, for example museums, or headquarters of powerful corporations). [A characteristic example is the Agbar Headquarter in Barcelona]. Every time that those buildings were gaining importance in the city-landscape, more significant were becoming for the branding of the city. With this logic, it is not strange that in the branding of the city of Barcelona, private buildings, (as Agbar Headquarter), had gained importance and had been converted in touristic poles, reflections of dynamism, landmarks of the city. Had constructed the new image of the contemporary Metropolis.

As the new buildings became landmarks - the image of the city -, it is obvious that the strategy behind their architectural design was more oriented towards the creation of buildings-objects or iconic buildings. Photogenic buildings with dynamism that can be easily captured in a touristic image, could be easily incorporated into a city’s advertisement campaign. Their principal “advantage” was their “originality”<sup>193</sup>. With new forms or new concepts, but always

---

<sup>191</sup> The mainstream theories of the city-branding accept this approach: that the city-branding, with the need to consume new images, requires new inversions (new projects, not always architectural) that will renew the image of the city. More alternative theories in the field of the city-branding (and more new ones), having the recent experience of the crisis, support that an effective city-branding can be implemented without new big inversions. Those city-branding strategies (that have incorporated more flexible tactics and smart approaches) are quite new in order to be evaluated, but do promise that an alternative path for the city-branding is possible.

<sup>192</sup> With the term city-event, we refer to the organization of activities which, on one hand, can attract the focus of the global audience to the city, and, on the other, can be the cause for the creation of new spaces or the re-design of the existing ones, requalifying them. The events that exist and can be hosted are World Fairs (Expo) or athletic organizations, such as the Olympic Games. Some other may be invented, as it is the case of the Forum 2004, an initiative of the Barcelona city council. The organization of those activities are directly related to the city-branding, since it may be a cause and an opportunity for the city to introduce itself anew to the world, which means that can be an opportunity to redesign its imaginary, its message and its city-branding strategy.

<sup>193</sup> A question could be how original is, for example, the Agbar Headquarters in Barcelona, designed by Jean Nouvel, since already has constructed, a couple of years ago, the Swiss Re Building in London by Norman Foster, which has a similar form. With the “originality” (for that reason in quotation marks) we want to refer to the impression that it creates to the public, an impression of originality, although for the experts (the architects) the form is not original at all, since there exist more recent or older projects with similar form. In this paragraph, we are interested in the effect that the buildings have on the public, how the public perceives them.

related to big (international or national) brand architectural offices, which design and sign them.

Although those buildings have to show that they are new and express their novelty (as the brands' fashion products do) [in order to give the impression that they renew the city], have, at the same time, to maintain something in the core of their architectural design that connects the specific building with the brand architectural office which designs it (again like the fashion products of the important brands). A Gehry's building has to look innovative and at the same time should look that it is a production of the Gehry's brand office. This curious situation brought the star architects and the architectural brand offices in the center of the city-branding. The brand architectural offices had incorporated (and still try to do so) the city's strategy for the city's promotion (the city-branding) in their architectural brand's strategy for the design of their architectural projects, through the architecture that those brand architects design. The close relationship between the brand architectural offices and the city-branding is not only obvious, is also a declared aim.

In the above paragraph we have mentioned something that, at first glance, seems contradictory. How something can be innovative and, at the same time, part of a continuous procedure. (The brand architectural production should be characterized by a sort of continuity, based on the maintenance of the main elements of its architectural imaginary). The solution may lay at the concept: *progression*. A progressive evolution presupposes a continuity (we don't have a rapture or conceptual leaps in this process) and at the same time a qualitative improvement which can ensure that the new result is better than the previous ones. Can a progressive evolution include innovation and more than that, novelty? The thesis believes that it can and for that reason presents that procedure as an explanation of what happens.

As we have seen, in the same project might have been incorporated two brand's strategies. The brand's strategy of the architectural office which has a specific architectural imaginary and the city-branding's strategy with its own imaginary which want to be expressed through the building. In the case of a private building that exercises the role of the landmark, there is a third brand's strategy too. The one of the corporation which has its own imaginary that needs to be projected onto the building. Ultimately, the corporation pays for the construction of this contemporary city landmark.

We will refer to the main example of this chapter, the Agbar Headquarters, designed by Jean Nouvel, in order to explain the co-existence of these three brand's strategies and the respective imaginaries. Jean Nouvel, the architect of the building, as a sensational architect, has to follow a brand's strategy that will lead him at a project which has the ability to attract the interest of the citizens. Playing with the visual effect of the façade and with the dynamic form of the building he meets that requirement. The brand strategy of the Agbar Corporation, the company that manages the water distribution in Barcelona, obviously has as aim, on the one hand, to show its economically powerful position in the Catalan society, and, on the other hand, to express its character as water distributor. The project design has managed to fulfill those goals, on the one hand, through the imposing figure of the building, and on the other hand, through its inventive, changing and dynamic character of the façade, that simulated the

reflections of water. Finally, the city<sup>194</sup>-branding's strategy needs for an attractive, fresh, novel, impressive and iconic landmark, which can be easily diffused through the media to all over the world. A land mark that can express the dynamic, ambitious, extroverted and joyful character of Barcelona. We can evaluate from the result that Jean Nouvel has taken under consideration this city's necessity at the design of the specific project.

From the above example it can be demonstrated that the three brand's strategies and their respective imaginaries can coexist and define together the final architectural result, when the private building is called to exercise as landmark. This final architectural result has a hybrid character which is the synthesis of the elements of the involved imaginaries. In this point, it will be necessary to focus on one of those imaginaries, the imaginary of the city-branding, since the present chapter analyzes this theme. The city-branding's imaginary is the identity which the city wants to emit to the rest of the world. Since it is related to a city, has to characterize the way of living, the cultural and social background of that city, as well as, the collective expectations, in other words, towards which direction the citizens, as a collective organism, wants to go. Has to contain, in an equilibrium, parts of the past, the present and the future of the city. In order to create the city-branding's imaginary, there should be a very good knowledge of all the above mentioned parameters and, at the same time, a synthetic capacity, with aim to bring together and in a compact condition<sup>195</sup> all of its elements. The imaginary should be dynamic, attractive and meaningful, containing a representative narration that can express the whole city<sup>196</sup>. In parallel, the city-branding's imaginary has the same structure and qualitative characteristics with the brand's imaginary (is of the same sort) and for that reason, the same methods can be used for their creation.

Does the crisis that had beat Europe and big part of the western world have changed this approach? For the moment (or maybe permanently?) there is a change of interest. The social situation and its problems, in some cases, had prevailed against all those intentions to take care of the image (of what is happening in the surface). The blow-out of the blissfulness bubble which has been asserted politically, socially and economically on the society has revealed a new reality. We are in a turning point and we do not know which will be the predominant model after the crisis. Will the current city-branding's model and the implication

---

<sup>194</sup> Is it possible for a city to impose its brand strategy, especially in a case of a private building? As we can see from the history of the specific example, it can. The building of the Agbar Headquarters was possible to be built in the specific crucial point of Barcelona (on the Avinguda Diagonal and the Plaça de les Clories Catalanes) only after the permission from the city council. A special permission was also needed in order the building to pass the maximum height that the Barcelona's building regulations permit. In order to have that impressive presence in the city skyline and have that height, an extraordinary urban role should have been invented. As in the 80' the twin towers at Port Olimpic were possible to be built because of the invention of the need for an urban landmark, in the late 90' a new invention for a new landmark and the consequent city council's permission made possible the existence of Agbar building. As we can see, there are ways the city to impose its (brand) strategy.

<sup>195</sup> We may remind the role of the slogan in the brand strategy. In the same way, at the city-branding, the imaginary should be expressed by a corresponding slogan, that can be (as in the case of the normal brands) compact, effective and dynamic.

<sup>196</sup> The phrase "*that can express the whole city*" is very theoretical, since that never can happen. It should be an aim and there should be the attempt to incorporate as much "parts" of the city is possible. But finally, always would be groups of citizens who will not feel that this "constructed" imaginary express and represent them. The toughest differentiations to the city-branding imaginary and attacks to the city-branding strategy will come from them.

of the brand architectural offices will survive or we will have a completely new panorama? And if the second happened, which will be the role of architecture in the procedure of promoting the city, in the competition between the cities? How radically that can change the panorama?

From the small experience that we have in this new situation (and for that reason we can't proceed to a final evaluation) we can comment<sup>197</sup> that from the variety of different forms of implementation that the brand's strategy has in space, the one which refers to the city (the city-branding) is that which more has suffered by the crises. Maybe this has to do with the fact that the city-branding is related with very sensitive matters (political, social, cultural ones) that change easily in situations of crises. Of course we have to wait in order to see the final result, but, from what we have seen up to now, we may dare to say that the current city-branding's strategies should be revised.

If we will see the broader image, besides of what happens to the western world, we will notice that the Cities in Asia or in the Middle East [as well as the cities of the emerging (economically) countries of Southern America (for example Brazil)] continue to compete between themselves with the same model which the European Metropolises used to compete the last decade. The fact that this model isn't actually operative in our society, doesn't mean that it doesn't exist somewhere else, where a parallel competition takes place. This must make us reserved with the frivolous proclamation of the definitive death of that model and have the patience (of the one who is not directly involved and affected) to see which will be the next step.

If the model overcomes its problems, it will be for one reason: for its capacity to adapt. And maybe that adaptation will have to do with the imaginary which exists in the city-branding's strategy. A strong imaginary for the city will be the one which is capable to adjust itself to the framework of the new situation. Maybe we will see in the future a reaction of the city-branding's strategy, trying to fit to the current conditions, which will create a "soft" imaginary, an imaginary sensitive to the social and economical situation, less arrogant, more modest and more focused on the human scale.

#### **4.7.1. Case study: "Brandelona": Barcelona as a city model.**

One characteristic case study for the analysis of the city-branding is Barcelona. From the period of the preparation for the Olympic Games of 1992, a big extrovert campaign has started in order to "put Barcelona in the world map of the Metropolises". The organization of a big event, as the Olympic Games, was the excuse for the renovation of the urban tissue of

---

<sup>197</sup> As it is obvious, this comment refers to the current situation of crisis in the western (and mainly European) world. In the rest of the world (Asia, South America) we see that the city-branding model, as it was implemented the last two decades, continues the same with the success that it has previously in the western world. So, it is not easy to make a final evaluation for the city-branding models, since actually, in different situations we have different results. The evaluation is even more difficult since we can observe alternative city-branding strategies (smart, cheap, adaptive to the new situations) which can prove that the city-branding model can adapt to the changes.

Barcelona and the development of its urban design in such level that now is a world reference as a contemporary model of urban design. Besides of its huge effort to develop its capacity to attract the world economic capital and the businesses which operate in a global level, its model is more well-known for the development of a city that is aesthetically attractive and competitive in the touristic level. But we must not forget that the effort to improve the city (although with other strategy and goals) has started<sup>198</sup> from the decade of the 80' and after a lot of work, Barcelona has reached the recognition<sup>199</sup> from all over the world for its capacity (although it is a small city compared with the other Metropolises and with small budget at that period) to have a qualitative and coherent urban model.

Barcelona as a city model is well-known for its cultural background (Catalan culture), its advanced urban design<sup>200</sup> (design of urban spaces, as well as the design of the urban furniture) and the existence of qualitative architectural projects (already constructed or in progress). Its unique urban model (based in past architectural achievements, as the local *Modernismo*, but also to contemporary architectural projects, designed by international architects) has given to the city a specific character and a specific "imaginary" (in order to use terms of the brand's theory) that converts it into an attractive Mediterranean capital.

---

<sup>198</sup> We read at the book "*La Ciudad de los arquitectos*" of Llätzer Moix: "*The architecture constructed during the fifties and the sixties in Barcelona was, sadly often, a nightmare born by speculative and uncivil ambitions. The one of the eighties was, to a great extent, an architecture that can be received by the future generations with legitimate pride. It has been conceived in a few centers of power, with some illustrative despotism and in some cases commissioned directly, but also with love and with good overall results. It could have been more innovative -for convenience of the professional elites, admiration of the foreign intellectuals and rejection from a big part of the citizens, which traditionally suffer from urticaria when they come in contact with the cultural novelties. But it was (the architecture), above all, honest and reasonable, has combined some boldness with a lot of restraints, following the tradition of Barcelona. It has positioned many architects in the foreground, and Barcelona, the city of the architects, has found its place in the world*". Llätzer Moix, *La Ciudad de los arquitectos*, Barcelona: Anagrama, 1994, 252.

He also writes: "*The urban and architectural transformation has been the main cultural event in Barcelona in the eighties. During that decade, in Barcelona notable novels were written, music and theater were played and dance was performed, a lot of paintings and sculptures were made and additionally there had started exorbitant businesses related to these and other artistic expressions. But it was the architecture – and by extension the urban planning – the classical art with greater impact on the citizens' life*". *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>199</sup> Llätzer Moix remembers: "*After years of hard work and little recognition, the success came suddenly. It was not due to anything concrete. It didn't come together with a specific inauguration. It was the fruit of a long and reasoned process. Suddenly, Barcelona had become favorite reference of the international press, its urban reform was explained in various languages, its architecture also, its design industry seemed to have been earmarked to replace the traditional manufacturing sectors. The rain of foreign journalists on the municipal press service has intensified. Everyone wanted to know about squares, parks, sculptures, buildings, Olympic venues... All of them turned to write worm praises for a city which they have seen to be reborn, which has left behind the sloth, which seemed to do the things wisely*". *Ibid.*, 159.

About the Barcelona's success of that period he comments: "*The atmosphere was euphoric; it invited you to participate in this transformation, which was already certified positively by the foreign journalists and popular understanding. Barcelona became a desired destination for architects and sculptors from all over the world. Everyone wanted to leave its mark in the changing city, to join the party and, as far as possible, to make it sound louder. Two were the important decisions: how the things should be done and who will sign them*". *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>200</sup> Important books for the understanding of the role of the urban design in the development of Barcelona are: a) Joan Busquets Grau, *Barcelona: The Urban Evolution of a Compact City*, Rovereto, Italy and Cambridge, Mass.: Nicolodi and Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 2005, and b) Peter Rowe, *Building Barcelona: A second Renaixença*, Barcelona: Actar editions, 2006.

Barcelona has been converted into a model of city-branding (caused of its extrovert communication towards the world), fact that gave to this city a new hybrid name: "Brandelona": a new Barcelona organized as a branded model<sup>201</sup>. The fact that the city model is based in the urban and architectural design can be demonstrated by specific information. Barcelona is the second city in Spain most chosen by foreign postgraduate students, in order to study in a postgraduate course (Master, Doctorate etc). But it is the first city in Spain most chosen by foreign architects, in order to study there a postgraduate architectural course. That fact can show clearly the content of the city's brand, the image that it projects to the world and its dynamism.

Taking into account this reality, it is easy to explain why so many international architects (brand architectural offices) had operated in (or had designed for) Barcelona the last two decades. Most of those operations were related to buildings of private interests or new public buildings that try to become new landmarks in the landscape of the city. The brand's strategy of the city (expressed by the public sector or the private one) through the design of new buildings was directly related to brand architectural offices that can associate their brand's strategy with the one of the city.

Under this logic, it is not strange to see that what the City of Barcelona projected to the world the previous years was its cooperation with brand architectural offices. Some architectural offices that, through their "unique" architectural projects-objects, created some new icons for the City. The cities' competition seemed that had obliged the responsible officers for the City of Barcelona (and all of those who were implicated in the creation of the Barcelona's image, for example private entities) to enter in a procedure of contracting brand architectural offices<sup>202</sup> (as some of the rival cities did). As, in our contemporary Mass Society two neighbors are "competing" through their brand cars, the contemporary cities seem to compete between themselves, through the brand architectural offices and the architectural projects that those design.

The last years of the severe crisis in all over Europe had touched also Barcelona. The recession had obliged the Catalan capital to slow down and to give emphasis to the real social problems, to the city economic survival and to the safeguard of the social cohesion. We cannot forecast which will be the future of the 'Barcelona Model', but we may estimate that in the next years will follow a more modest course. The question is if it will still be engaged after

---

<sup>201</sup> Two books can be very helpful for the understanding of the Barcelona model. They are moving towards opposite directions, one in favor of the last decades' model and the other against. For that reason, their parallel reading can lead to an objective understanding of the aforementioned model. The first one is: Jaume Guillaumet (ed.), *El tema es Barcelona: Converses de Pasqual Maragall amb Josep M. Espinas, Oriol Bohigas, Ramon Folch, Fabia Estape i Victoria Camps*, Barcelona: La campana, 1995. It is in favor to the model that Barcelona has in the 80' and 90'. How cannot be, since the participants of the transcribed dialogues are crucial personalities of that era that had contributed at the creation of that model? The most significant, Pascal Maragall, was Barcelona's Mayor from 1982 to 1997. The second book is: Unió Temporal d'Escribes (ed.), *Barcelona, marca registrada: un model per desarmar*, Barcelona: Virus, 2004. A critical book which positions itself against that development model.

<sup>202</sup> We read at the book "*La Ciudad de los arquitectos*" of Llätzer Moix: "*It's very important*", adds *Busquets*, '*properly assess how foreign architects have worked in Barcelona. Here we have searched for a balance. We have tried to avoid provincialism. We have not closed the doors to good foreign professionals. But neither we've accepted a bad job (from their part)...*'. See: L. Moix, *La Ciudad de los arquitectos*, op.cit., 162. And he continues: "*City officials have always been aware of the architects' value, both of the foreign and the local ones' indicates the architect Alfredo Arribas...*". *Ibid.*, 163.

the crisis with the strategy of the branded architecture, as it was the last two decades, after the Olympic Games of 1992 and especially the last ten years before the beginning of the economic crisis. And if not, this rupture with the strategy of the branded architecture would it be permanent or just would it be a break until that strategy would come back, adjusted to the new circumstances?

Taking into account that the Catalan architectural community had managed to create small and middle-scale brand architectural offices (and has managed to project them to the world, with relative success, in the competition with other global architectural offices) we might predict that the model of brand architectural offices which are involved in the promotion of the 'Barcelona Model', through their branded work, will continue. The difference with the previous period is that those brand architectural offices, this time, will be probably Catalan, and will be small or middle-scale (but recognized) offices, instead of the big brand architectural offices which were implicated in the development of the 'Barcelona Model' before. Those small and middle-scale offices have another brand's strategy. Instead of having as a principal aim to impress, their strategy is based on small spatial inventions through the design, related to the cultural content of architecture and the cultural and social content of Barcelona. A modest strategy which can be attractive because of its flexibility and its capacity to find, in the small scale, elements of great importance for the design. Isn't that the same model with the one, through which the City of Barcelona had tried to project itself to the world the first Spanish democratic years? Wasn't the 'Barcelona Model' originally based on small project designs by Catalan architects at the '80 and through them it started to be well-known internationally?

#### **4.8. The other scales 2. The regional branding.**

The implementation of the brand's strategies in the field of the economy it is already well-known. Aim always is the creation of an identity (for the branded product) in order that to be easier recognizable and a greater level of affinity between the product and the purchaser to be achieved. The last decades the brand's strategies have also been applied to space. In this case we speak about "spatial branding" and has different levels, depending on which scale of space we refer (city, region, national territory). All of them have the same aim: to attract three factors: the capital, the tourists and the talent.

Given the importance of the competition between the cities and the nations, the "city branding" and the "territorial branding" (of a country<sup>203</sup>) are already well-developed. A variety of brand's strategies has been applied on those two levels, depending on the size, the dynamic and the level of competitiveness of each city or country. On the other side, the regional branding (of a small area or region) is not so much well-developed (if we except some cases, e.g. Catalunya<sup>204</sup>), maybe because there is not a strong political will behind the

<sup>203</sup> See: Josep Francesc Valls, *La Imagen de marca de los países*, Madrid: McGraw-Hill, 1992.

<sup>204</sup> It is interesting the case of promotion (the branding) of Catalunya, especially if we related its branding to the city branding of Barcelona, its capital city (to which we have referred previously). The relationship of a territory with its capital city is crucial as a factor for the promotion of the territory. The relationship and the interdependency of the Catalan territory and Barcelona is such (some have already referred to



region's governance. For that reason, the branding of the regions<sup>205</sup> depends on the national branding, without taking into consideration the diversity of the regions' identity and their needs inside the same country. Obviously, it is an important theme which has to be analyzed and the content of the regional branding's strategies should be in greater extent developed.

#### **4.8.1. Tourism and regional (costal) branding. Architectural design strategies serving the coastal branding.**

An observer of the coastal zone of Cyprus or Crete (either by actually visiting the islands or simply from satellite images) or the mainland of Greece, Italy and Spain, will notice that there is a strong resemblance between the built environment of those Mediterranean countries. There is a similarity of the "coastal structure" that forms a specific model, a Mediterranean model of coastal "development". The model is simple: No prior urban planning. The initiative is mainly private. The public intervention is limited to the minimum necessary (the construction of the infrastructure: nothing more than a touristic bus to reach the hotel from the airport or less frequently from the marina). From the above, we can imagine what the outcome would be: The urban sprawl dominates at the Cypriot or Greek coast, as it does in the most Mediterranean coastal areas. The sprawl as pattern determines the physical form of the coastal areas.

This did not happen by chance. It is a "developing" model based on the main economic factor of the coastal zones: tourism. This factor places a key role in the way that the Mediterranean coast has been developed and changed the last decade, not only in an abstract economic level but especially in the physical level. In order to understand (and to change?) the way that the Mediterranean coast has been transformed, we must before understand the way that the tourist factor is been implemented in the Mediterranean countries.

---

the opinion that Barcelona is not just representing Catalunya, is Catalunya, through an act of equation) that the city branding of Barcelona is, at the same time, a promotion of the Catalan territory. In any case, the territorial branding of Catalunya is one of the most active worldwide in its category (taking, of course, advantage of the importance of its capital city).

<sup>205</sup> And interesting approach is the transnational branding. The branding of an area which is composed by regions of different (neighbor) countries. We have referred in a previous chapter to the transnational branding with the example of the area of the East Aegean Sea which includes the Greek region of the Greek Aegean islands and Turkish region of the west coast on the base of developing in common the tourism. This branding is a regional branding, has its characteristics and aim is to explore the advantages of an area, which is divided technical in two countries but maintains a type of unity, because of its historical, geographical and social background. The interesting in this type of branding is that, although it is a regional branding, it does not depend on a national branding (as normally happens at the regional branding) since it is composed by areas of two or more nationalities. There is a lot of potentiality in this type of branding and the present thesis would like to highlight that fact. Institutionally we can see that the transnational branding is promoted by the European Union. There exist the "euroregions" which are transboundary regions that connect regions of European Union's countries or regions that belongs to EU and neighbor non-EU countries. Those euroregions are created on the base of common identity, of common characteristics that should be developed together. See: "Euroregions", *Wikipedia* [wiki], last modified 19 Apr. 2015, <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euroregion>>, accessed 15 May 2015.

We have mentioned in a previous chapter the catalytic role that the tourism is having in the cities' competition. The specialist can ensure that the same catalytic role is tourism having in the competition between regions or countries. Especially, if we speak about coastal regions with main production base the touristic phenomenon, the competition between them is taking place almost exclusively on that factor. We have seen the role of tourism in the cities' competition and the city branding that has been developed in order to serve this competition. In the same way a region branding (or a nation branding, if we speaking about countries) has been developed in order to make the regions' (or countries') competition more efficient. Obviously, in regions (or countries) like the Mediterranean ones their branding is related strongly with tourism and the imaginary that they create is obviously associated with the type of tourism that they want to attract.

Since the theme of the present thesis is the analysis of the relationship between the branding and the architectural (or urban) design, this chapter has the aim to investigate how specific design strategies (that can be taken in order to improve the current spatial condition) can, in parallel, define the content of the region's branding and improve the imaginary that the last is creating.

In order to reach these types of conclusions, it is important first to explain the spatial condition that we investigate. We have mentioned before that the sprawl dominates at the Mediterranean coastal areas and that the sprawl, as a pattern, determines the physical form of the coastal areas.

The sprawl is related to the voids, the in-between empty plots for which only two prospects exist: Either to be built as the nearby plot has (obviously with touristic uses) or to remain void, useless, empty, abandoned. Although the initiative is private, meaning that we may expect a variety of structures, the circumstances lead to a strange homogeneity: Buildings of two or three floors (just what the family which owns the plot can afford and build a self-managed hostel with a small market or bar at the ground floor, ran by the same family or a friend). Its form doesn't differentiate (it does not have to) from the urban buildings in the nearby city.

The coastal zone imitated the urban and suburban structure of the Mediterranean cities, without the urban life however. This will be obvious to the visitors from the very first day. The Mediterranean touristic coastal zone is a *monocultured area*. The uses are almost exclusively touristic: Hotels, hostels, bars, minimarkets for tourists, etc. Even the local pharmacy and the private small clinic are for tourists, opening only during the tourist season. What about the urban public space? It is limited to the small sidewalks (to be exact, to what is left from the sidewalks following their occupation by the bar or restaurant tables), the small squares around the town-hall and the local church. What about the beaches: the public space by excellence of the coastal zones? They are occupied as well, by sun-beds and umbrellas, rented from a local company. Such a contradiction: So many empty spaces, so few public spaces...

In order to have the broader image, it is important to move to a bigger scale. The one that will allow us to have the complete view of the coastal zone... In that scale we can observe the continuity of the coastal built environment. We can move from one side to the other and be

accompanied in our entire journey by that eternal linear sprawl, that continuum which gives the impression of a perforated Megacity, without centers and peripheries, without qualitative and quantitative variations. Which hosts million of visitors during the summer period and is virtually a ghost city during the winter.

If branding is the process of creating an imaginary, in other words, an identity for a product or a spatial unit (city or region), obviously the spatial identity of a place is its public space. Reconstructing the public space (and its image), we reshape its identity. In places where there is strong lack of public space, its creation from scratch not only develops the condition of everyday life but also give the base for a successful branding. In the case of the areas we investigate in the present chapter, the lack of public space can be the factor for a constructive branding. The new public space will be the new image of the area. On those public spaces can be built the new imaginary that the area would like to spread to the tourists' markets. Obviously, the branding of a touristic region is related to its history, its way of everyday life, its physical appearance and its citizens' habits and tradition. The spatial branding, on the other hand, which interests us now, is related to the urban and architectural space that exists or we construct, in order to improve it. In this way of thinking, the (re)construction of the public space is the (re)formation of its (broader regional) branding.

Speaking of the sprawl, trying to find a contrasting example (I believe it helps to think with contrasting models that can generate a debate and allow for their qualitative and quantitative differences to emerge), Benidorm comes to my mind. Benidorm belongs to the province of Alicante, at the Valencian Community. It is a Spanish coastal touristic city, at its Mediterranean side, which constitutes an anti-paradigm. Instead of preying and destroying the Spanish coast with a diffused model, a sprawl that never ends, it concentrates all of its development in a very small area, in merely 38.5 km<sup>2</sup>. Its surface corresponds only to 0.16% of the Valencian Community's area. It generates 6% of the Community's GDP and it hosts 43% of the Community's touristic activity. It is obvious that with the mainstream touristic model, in order for the same income to be generated, a far greater area would be required. How did Benidorm achieve that outcome? By using a completely different model. Instead of sprawling, it uses the model of the compact city (although it is not a normal city) and additionally constructs high-rise buildings, implementing an American model and forming a New-York skyline<sup>206</sup> at the Mediterranean coast. The compact model gives cohesion, density of uses, energy and time efficiency.

I don't use this example in order to propose the implementation of this model (of super high density) in the Mediterranean coast. I am using it in order to describe my first idea – design strategy. To show how important it is to put an end at the sprawl phenomenon that preys our coasts and to start a process to densify the uses and the structures providing a greater level of cohesion. This first strategy aims to put an end to the never ending expansion and give

---

<sup>206</sup> The model of Benidorm and its skyline have inspired interesting architectural proposals too. We would like to refer to the Federico Soriano and Dolores Palacios' proposal to the competition for the Cultural Center of Benidorm, which we will present later.

*MVRDV, Costa Iberica project. A project for the development of tourism at the Spanish coasts*



emphasis to the internal reinforcement of the uses/structures and the open public spaces. The densification of certain coastal areas (selected by a number of criteria) will lead to the, necessary for their financial and social sustainability, formation of centers.

Besides the image that this major decision can construct (the image of a compact city, with all its fake urban life, in an area where sprawl would have been expected), a new branding proposal has emerged. Benidorm has been an alternative destination to the mainstream touristic destinations. All of them of course (including Benidorm) are under the model of “sun and beach”. The alternative character of Benidorm is that the tourist, at the moment to abandon the beach, finds a “shelter” not to a “village” as it is in the case of the majority of the touristic destinations, but to a “city”, with all its iconography. For us, the architects and the urban planners, that is a major change. At that, we have to add the efficiency (of energy, time etc) that the compact city offers. All of them are positive messages that has been included to the Benidorm’ branding strategy and is, according to my point of view, the main reason for making the touristic product of Benidorm so attractive.

In order to move one step forward, it would be useful if we refer to the project “*Costa Iberica*”. Inspired by the mass tourist phenomenon in Spain, the Dutch architectural office MVRDV had leaded a research (together with a local Catalan School of Architecture) in order to reflect the present condition, explore the impact of that massive phenomenon and propose possible actions. That research took the form of a book, the “*Costa Iberica: Upbeat to the Leisure City*”<sup>207</sup>, published in 2000 by the Actar Editions. The Dutch architectural firm, through that book, investigates which can be the future of the Spanish coast, the Costa Iberica, how it can be activated, in order to be an example of a sustainable ‘Leisure City’.

In that research we can notice the preoccupation of MVRDV regarding the impact of the mass tourism on the coastal environment. Especially that the extensively built coast (although with low density), has reached its limits. As a solution, the office of MVRDV proposes a procedure of densification (in phases) of specific areas, to an extent (obviously inspired by the Benidorm model), that gives to the space “urban” characteristics. For that reason it speaks about a “city”, a “Leisure City”...

In this proposal of the MVRDV team we can see some direct references to the subject that we investigate. To the construction of the imaginary as a base for a successful spatial branding. Their proposal is a collection of images (how the Spanish coast can look like if it follows the Benidorm paradigm) that, in its normal Dutch provocative attitude by exaggerating the situation and reaching it at its limits, we can read the intention (maybe the ambition) of the architects to do something more than designing and constructing the space. The intention to create the main directives on which a spatial branding can be developed. The ambition to define the parameters of how a place can transmit meaningful messages, as it happens when a place is designed to have unique characteristics.

---

<sup>207</sup> Mathurin Hardel et al. (eds.), *Costa ibérica: upbeat to the leisure city*, Barcelona: Actar editions, 2000.

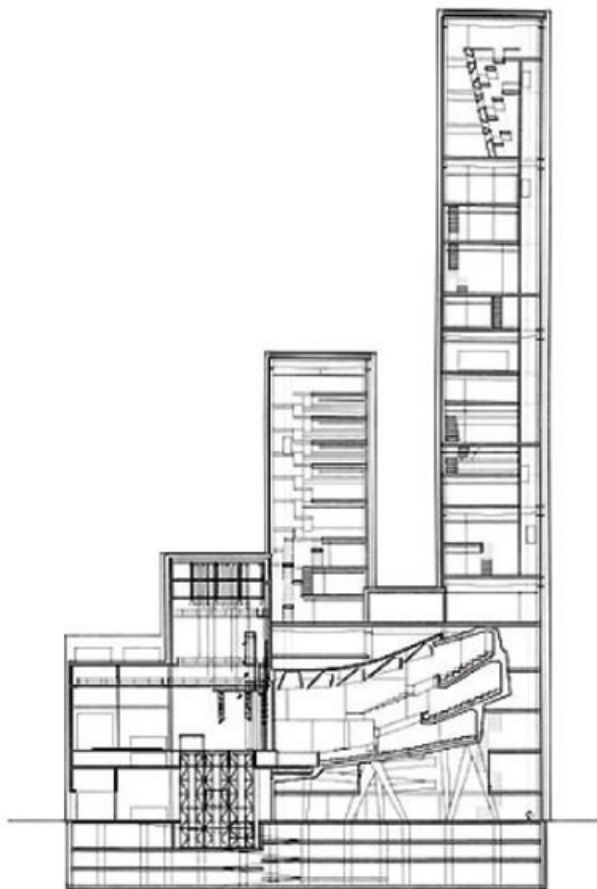
What it is interesting with MVRDV's research (advancing our thoughts one step ahead) is the proposal to activate an additional (complementary) strategy, in parallel with the strategy of the densification, the strategy of "recycling". The office of MVRDV believes that the space, as the case is with the certain types of waste, can be recycled, meaning it can change form, functions and characteristics and can be transformed into something else, including returning to its previous condition as well. Emphasizing the last option (the return to its previous condition), the Dutch architects have proposed the densification of some coastal areas, for the sole purpose of providing the chance for some other areas to be recovered by nature, activating an inverse course. Gradually some structures (for example buildings) should be demolished and the nature should take their place. The structures should be reverted in its previous condition. In this point we have to mention that this strategy is not a theoretical proposal, is something feasible, a plan that can be accomplished. An example is the Shanties (Barraques)<sup>208</sup> at the Barcelonan Montjuic Hill that had been progressively built at the 50' and had been "recycled" at the late 80', as part of the Olympic restructure plan of Barcelona...

The MVRDV's proposal leads us to the second strategy for this chapter: Recycling part of the coastal tissue, aiming for the nature to recover its previous position and to reach a better balance with the built environment. With this strategy we inject in the regional (coastal) branding a new concept: the recycling. A concept that has some ecological connotations (which means that it constructs a positive notion), but more than that (in a point where I would like to stay more) it refers to another notion, also important: the change. The coastal region where the tourist is invited to spend some of his/her most important days, the ones of vacation, is not a stable situation, on the other hand, it is changing, it is willing to change. The tourist is invited, not only to enjoy the attractions of the coastal zone, but also to participate to the change, to be witness of something that is being changing according to a program/plan. This powerful meaning of change is an important factor for the regional branding of the coastal zone.

The lack of public space is mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. This is mainly referred to the open public space, the importance of which we will argue later on. In this point I would like to focus on the absence of buildings with public uses (cultural, social or civil). The unorganized (and not planned) character of the coastal development up to now, together with the mainly private character of those interventions, makes the evolution of the present situation predictable. Although at the beginning of the Mediterranean touristic phenomenon, known as "*sun and beach*", the public facilities seemed unnecessary (especially the cultural and social ones), in the present condition of extreme competitiveness those facilities start to be essential components of a competitive product, elements of distinction, which the high end tourists are looking for. They are the *added value*.

---

<sup>208</sup> An excellent exhibition under the title: "Shanties. The Informal City" (Barraques. La Ciutat Informal), that took place from 18 of July 2008 to 22 of February 2009 at the Museum of History of Barcelona, explains to construction and the demolition of the shanties in Barcelona. It has used an excellent photographic achieve and information that can be found at the web. See: MUHBA, "Shanties. The Informal City", *Museu d'Historia de Barcelona* [website], (2008) <<http://www.barraques.cat/en/index.php>>, accessed 15 May 2015. See also: Laura de Antres, *Barraques: La lluita dels invisibles*, Barcelona: Ara Llibres, 2011.



*Federico Soriano and Dolores Palacios, section  
for the Cultural Center in Benidorm, Spain*

The question for us, the architects, should be: How can we integrate new public facilities (and their corresponding physical structures) in the already constructed reality? How can we incorporate the new necessities in an existing built environment, where some of the buildings are obsolete and uninhabited as well, given the fact that those buildings can't fulfill the current needs?

We believe that the response should be in two directions. The first one should be the "recycling of uses", meaning to reuse existing buildings (by maintaining its structure and form), giving them however new functions, related to the public needs. The second one is to incorporate new structures that can fit to the existing built environment and its forms. Those two directions (which actually follow the principle of maintaining a formal equilibrium of the ensemble and to respect, by improving rather than contradicting the existing formal and structural condition) constitute the third strategy of the present text: Upgrading the public infrastructure, through already available forms, patterns and structures. The plan should be based on the existing forms; capable to integrate the new uses, without a visual and formal quality gap between the public and the private buildings.

An example reflecting that strategy is the proposal of Federico Soriano and Dolores Palacios for the Benidorm Cultural Center (1997), a proposal made for the homonymous architectural competition. [I present a proposal for Benidorm in order to maintain a coherent reference framework and to show that all strategies can be applied and coexist in the same area]. The main characteristic of this proposal is the decision to utilize the prevalent form and the dominating structure at Benidorm (the high-rise building), and in that structure to accommodate all the needs of a Cultural Center, with a successful final aesthetic and functional result. The sections<sup>209</sup> of their proposal can show how dynamic the final result is, demonstrating that, at the same time, the functions can be appropriately hosted and the whole edifice can be incorporated formally and symbolically at the present built environment.

This design strategy has to do with the qualitative background of the brand strategy. The brand, in general, and of course the brand of a place can be more attractive as it is more and more associated with cultural and social characteristics. As we have mentioned in the chapter 2.6, where we make a comparison between the services strategy and the brand strategy, the quantitative parameters are related, most of the time, with the services and the qualitative parameters with the brands. Of course, besides the aesthetics, the social and cultural factor plays a key role in the development of the brand. As much as we augment the social and cultural factor, in the same degree we construct a more attractive, complex, and for that reason, interesting branding effect. I would like, in this point, stay more in the complexity of the brand. As the brand is more complex in its contents and those are more interrelated, more attractive it becomes. We have seen at the beginning of this chapter that the touristic product of the Mediterranean coasts is monoculture, mainly "sun and beach". An effective branding of the coast should have the aim to make more complex the offer of the area. As in the model "sun and beach" we are adding more cultural and social events, more interesting the touristic product will be.

---

<sup>209</sup> The proposed building has the section of the Benidorm's typical skyscraper, but indeed of hosting a hotel, it hosts a cultural center. It reminds us also the Downdown Athletic Clup and all that it signifies in the architectural thinking of Rem Koolhaas. The free section strategy is also present in this project.



The forth and most important strategy is the reinforcement and the restructuring of the open public spaces. The present situation (as presented in the first paragraphs of this chapter) cannot host a sustainable and competitive tourist model, where the tourists look for livable, easily accessed open spaces that incorporate a variety of activities, spaces that are equipped with the necessary “urban furniture” to ensure their functionality and their everyday comfort.

Due to the fact that the existing public spaces are extremely shrunked, a plan should be raised to recover the occupied open spaces from the private activities and to add new ones to the network of the open public spaces. Obviously, the quantitative augmentation of the public space cannot, by itself, solve the problem. It should be accompanied by a qualitative improvement that only a coherent and effective design can ensure. A design that can correct the existing anomalies, aesthetically homogenize the whole and give a character to the public space (related to a great extent with leisure). A dynamic design that can reinforce the vital open public space, which normally is linear, parallel to the beach, a main public space that will act as the “point” of reference, functionally maintaining the role of the “backbone” that can creatively incorporate the scattered parts, attracting them around it. Finally, we are referring to a design that can enhance the most important part of the coastal zones, the beaches; it can manage to highlight their presence and can facilitate the easy access to them.

Since this design is related to a touristic product, it should be capable to give an added value and create a space that can be the image of an easily recognized and attractive local touristic brand. It should have a specific dynamic character, vibrant, open to potential activities and new uses.

As an example, I choose to show the project of Carlos Ferrater and Xavier Marti Gali (OAB) for the West Beach Promenade of Benidorm (2009). Their proposal aims to create a linear “point” of reference, to generate a specific character (giving also a recognizable image) and to reinforce (functionally and symbolically) the role of the beach, as the main attraction of the city. This project may not present the extent of intervention implied above but I have chosen to show it, since it express the spirit of that design.

Since the (open) public space is the heart of the urban design and of the everyday life of a specific community, its design has crucial role. A qualitative public space is an added value for the broader region, but also is an added value for the image that the local community wants to create for itself and want to transmit outside. For a region (like the Mediterranean coast) which has to compete in order to attract tourists, an attractive and functional (open) public space is vital for its existence. Benidorm has chosen a more expressive design. There are a lot of forms to design and create public space, that all of them can be equally successful. What it is important (from the point of view of the branding) is the public space to be capable to achieve two things: a) to create images that can be the representative of the area abroad, b) to incorporate different functions/activities that can take place in the same space.

In conclusion, this chapter aims to present the current condition of the coastal zones and to propose four strategies which (according to my point of view): 1) can improve the present situation and offer a better living environment for the visitors and the local citizens, and 2) can be the base (give the elements) for a constructive regional (coastal) branding that can attract the interest of possible future visitors. Those strategies are: a) The densification of specific areas of the coastal zone in order to prevent the expansion of the sprawl phenomenon, b) The “recycling” of chosen areas in an effort to be recovered by the nature and to return to the previous condition, c) The “recycling” of existing structures/buildings, changing their private uses to public ones and/or the creation of new public buildings, and d) The reinforcement and the restructuring of the open public space. Although the above mentioned strategies can be realized separately, they have a complementary character and for that reason it is believed to have a better result if they could be implemented together. As I have tried to explain in this chapter, those strategies have a *double utility*: at the one side, to give design directives (towards which directions we have to move in order to improve our touristic built environment and to which points we have to intervene), and, at the other side, to give elements of a possible branding procedure (of which things we can take advantage and where to give an added value to the message that we try to construct and send towards the rest of the world).