

Preface

I was fortunate enough to have around me several people who helped me cope with everything during the years of writing this thesis in the Netherlands. I have used the Acknowledgements section at the end of the thesis to thank them. In this preface, I would like to take the opportunity to mention and thank the people that were instrumental in the PhD project itself. First and foremost, this project owes the most to my supervisor Professor G.J. Ashworth. I would like to thank Professor Ashworth for his guidance, support and inspiration; for his encouragement when I was disappointed and for his patience when he was disappointed. The late Henk Voogd has also played a role in this project by initiating the whole work on city marketing in the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen and for many years inspiring a series of researchers on the subject. The project would most probably not have materialised if it weren't for the decision of the Board of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences to finance it. I would like to thank the Board and, particularly, the (then) Dean Professor Gerard Linden and the (then) director of URSI Professor Jouke van Dijk for granting me the scholarship that allowed me to do the research. I would also like to thank the Board members (particularly Prof. Inge Hutter) for renewing my contract in 2007 and giving me the necessary additional time to complete the project. Before that (the truth is after that also - to a lesser degree), the project was largely financed by my parents' generosity, which is certainly the most stable companion in my experimentations in life. Andrea, apart from being a constant source of inspiration (work and non-work related) and apart from listening to almost everything before it was put down on paper, also played a catalytic role in the development of the theoretical framework and designed the beautiful cover of the thesis. I would also like to thank all the informants in Amsterdam, Budapest and Athens for taking the time to talk to me about their work and give me all the information I needed. I appreciate the time and effort put in this thesis by the members of the reading committee, whose insightful comments have certainly improved the final result. Finally, I am honoured to defend my thesis against the esteemed academics who agreed to be members of the defence committee.

“An image of a city depends on both identity and alterity construction and has many constructors: politicians and officials, tourists and citizens, writers and filmmakers, architects and media people. It is impossible to show the whole of it, even in a fleeting moment, but it is possible to show fragments of its continuous construction. It is also possible to make some simplifications, rendering the picture more comprehensible. Yet, this picture is made even more complex by setting it in motion: these processes do not take their turns in time or place, but happen simultaneously, in connection, possibly, within one and the same organisational practice”. (Czarniawska 2003:15)

“I’ve wondered why it took us so long to catch on. We saw it and yet we didn’t see it. Or rather we were trained not to see it. Conned, perhaps, into thinking that the real action was metropolitan and all this was just boring hinterland. It was a puzzling thing. The truth knocks on the door and you say, “Go away, I’m looking for the truth,” and so it goes away. Puzzling.” (Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*)



Chapter 1

Introduction

