

The Bilbao Effect in Indonesia

Architectural Representation and the New Image of Banyuwangi City

Alya Lailatul Azizah¹, Susilo Kusdiwanggo^{1*}

¹Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: kusdiwanggo@ub.ac.id

Abstract

Keywords:

Banyuwangi; city branding; architectural representation; urban identity; Bilbao Effect.

This study examines the role of architectural representation in transforming the urban identity of Banyuwangi Regency, Indonesia, within the context of city branding. The research investigates how five public architectural projects—revitalized between 2012 and 2018—function as symbolic tools to reshape the city’s image from a mystical to a cultural one. Employing a qualitative narrative method within a constructivist paradigm, the study draws on interviews with architects and project managers, field observations, and document analysis. Data were analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding, interpreted using narrative tools such as path dependency, periodization, and historical contingency. The findings reveal that architecture serves as a strategic medium in three key dimensions: (1) generating a local version of the “Bilbao Effect” by producing iconic visual landmarks, (2) embedding *Osing* cultural values into building design to strengthen collective identity, and (3) transforming public perception through inclusive spatial revitalization. The study emphasizes that architectural representation is not merely aesthetic but also political, social, and symbolic. This research contributes to the theoretical discourse on spatial branding and provides practical insights for policymakers and urban designers seeking to construct culturally grounded city identities.

©2026 The Authors. Published by the University of Merdeka Malang, Indonesia.

Article History Received : July 1, 2025
 Accepted : Dec 18, 2025
 Published : Jan 15, 2026



1. Introduction

In the contemporary era of globalization, characterized by heightened mobility, inter-city competition, and the escalating significance of public perception, a city’s image has emerged as a strategic asset in social, economic, and environmental development. Visual, symbolic, and spatial representations play a pivotal role in shaping urban identity and differentiation at both regional and global levels (Filatova, Wei, Feng, Orozonova, & Kashymbekov, 2024). Within this context, architecture serves as a potent medium of communication, not only as an aesthetic expression but also as a conduit for conveying cultural values, historical narratives, and a city’s prospective vision m (El Messeidy,

2019). Numerous studies have demonstrated that iconic buildings and urban landscape designs can serve as catalysts for economic and cultural transformation, as exemplified by the Burj Khalifa in Dubai and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt (El Messeidy, 2019; Giorgi, Valderrey, & Montoya, 2022)

A comparable transformation of urban image can be observed in Banyuwangi, Indonesia, which was historically stigmatized as the “city of black magic” (*Kota Santet*) following the 1998–1999 tragedy (Affan, 2023). Over the past two decades—particularly during the leadership of Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas (2010–2021)—Banyuwangi has undergone a strategic repositioning as a cultural tourism city. This shift has been driven not only by an increase in tourist arrivals but also by a profound transformation in the city’s image and identity. Key initiatives include the development of public infrastructure grounded in local values, the organization of cultural festivals, and collaborations with nationally prominent architects (Caesario, 2016; Fanani, 2019). These policies contributed to a significant rise in Banyuwangi’s average economic growth, reaching 6.59% between 2010 and 2014—exceeding the East Java provincial average of 6.27% during the same period (Astro, 2015). Furthermore, Banyuwangi emerged as the second-largest contributor to national tourism revenue (Agung, 2020).

Despite these developments, scientific studies that explicitly examine the role of architecture within the city branding process remain limited, particularly in the Indonesian context. Existing research has primarily focused on marketing strategies, public relations, and communication aspects of city branding (Christine & Setyanto, 2021; Fikri, 2017; Rius-Ulldemolins & Díaz-Solano, 2023). In contrast, the spatial and cultural dimensions of city branding—especially the potential of architecture as a medium for shaping urban identity—have received comparatively little attention. This gap is critical, given that a city’s visual and spatial elements significantly influence public perception and urban imagery (Mihalis Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005).

In this context, the primary research question guiding this study is: How does architectural representation within city branding strategies contribute to the transformation of urban identity? This study seeks to investigate the strategic role of architectural representation in reshaping Banyuwangi’s city identity through public space design. It aims to analyze how symbolic and contextual elements in public architecture influence the city’s branding efforts, community perception, and cultural positioning. Additionally, the study intends to provide theoretical insights into the relationship between space and identity, as well as practical recommendations for city branding strategies grounded in local values.

City branding fundamentally seeks to cultivate positive perceptions of a city through compelling narratives and distinctive visual forms. When such branding strategies are rooted in local characteristics embodied in architecture, the resulting identity narratives tend to be more authentic and meaningful (Costa & Carneiro, 2021; Forina Lestari, Dali, & Che-Ha, 2020). This perspective aligns with the concept of symbolic representation, which views buildings and public spaces as carriers of cultural values that are recognized and interpreted by both local communities and visitors (Roudbari, 2021). In this sense, architecture operates not merely as an aesthetic artifact but as a symbolic instrument that fosters collective awareness and spatial memory (Cherkes, Idak, & Rakochyi, 2024).

Recent scholarly research underscores the need to involve multiple stakeholders in the architecture-based city branding process. These stakeholders encompass political

The Bilbao Effect in Indonesia

Architectural Representation and the New Image of Banyuwangi City

Alya Lailatul Azizah, Susilo Kusdiwanggo

leaders, designers, local communities, and tourism stakeholders (Malamud, Neves, & Patrocinio, 2022; Torres Zamudio, González Castro, & Manzano Durán, 2021). This collaborative approach fosters a participatory and inclusive process of urban representation, thereby strengthening the emotional connection between communities and their urban environments (Jakupi & Jashari-Kajtazi, 2018). Banyuwangi's experience, characterized by community engagement in discussions about public space design, exemplifies the importance of incorporating local cultural values in constructing a distinctive city identity.

Despite the significance of iconic public architecture in shaping city perception, empirical research directly linking it to changes in urban identity in Indonesia remains limited. While numerous studies have explored tourism branding strategies in Banyuwangi (Efendi, 2017; Fikri, 2017), systematic investigations into the role of architecture in shaping urban identity are still scarce. This study addresses this gap by focusing on architectural representation as a central mechanism in Banyuwangi's city branding strategy.

The objective of this study is to examine the role of architectural representations in public projects in transforming Banyuwangi's city identity as part of its city branding strategy. This research offers a novel approach by integrating spatial, cultural, and narrative methods to assess the impact of architecture on urban perception. The findings of this study are expected to make theoretical contributions to city branding research and to offer practical recommendations for local governments and urban designers for developing sustainable branding strategies grounded in local identity.

This study posits that symbolically and contextually designed public architecture functions as a strategic instrument for reconstructing urban identity. Architectural representation is hypothesized to play a decisive role in communicating local cultural values, strengthening collective memory, and reshaping public perceptions of a city previously associated with negative imagery.

2. Literature Review

City branding has evolved from traditional marketing strategies to encompass a broader urban development approach. This shift emphasizes the construction of collective identity and the management of public perception through visual, symbolic, and spatial tools (Michalis Kavartzis, 2004; Mihalis Kavartzis & Ashworth, 2005; Kotler & Gertner, 2007). In this perspective, cities transcend their physical existence and become narratives that can be molded and conveyed through visual elements, particularly architecture (Prilenska, 2012). A city's identity is constructed through a synthesis of physical attributes, historical context, cultural values, and symbolic narratives, which are curated for both local and global audiences (Jones & Svejnova, 2017; Kandemir, 2017; Madanipour, 2013). This process is significantly influenced by globalization, which intensifies the pressure on cities to differentiate symbolically while preserving their local distinctiveness (Lippuner & Werlen, n.d.; Rius-Ulldemolins & Posso Jiménez, 2016).

Architecture plays a pivotal role in city branding, serving as a means of representing and conveying a city's values, identity, and aspirations. Through symbolic representation, architecture transcends mere visual appeal, encompassing ideological, cultural, and political connotations (Hall, 2020). Architecture constitutes an integral component of a city's communication system, operating on three distinct levels: the physical (structure), the visual (design), and the rhetorical (cultural significance) (Jones & Svejnova, 2017).

These representations are experienced by the public through the built environment, thereby shaping memory and fostering emotional attachment (Cherkes et al., 2024; Filatova et al., 2024; Jakupi & Jashari-Kajtazi, 2018).

The global idea of the "Bilbao Effect"—a term that refers to the use of iconic architecture to revitalize a city's image and economy—is a strong example of how architecture can change a city's identity. The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, conceived by the renowned architect Frank Gehry, stands as an iconic symbol not only for its architecture but also for its role as a pivotal component of a comprehensive urban revitalization initiative. This initiative encompassed the rejuvenation of industrial zones, the enhancement of transportation systems, and the fostering of a vibrant creative economy (Franklin, 2016; Lorente, 2024; Wouters, 2022). Empirical studies conducted in North America reveal that cities characterized by iconic architectural landmarks often experience concomitant cultural and economic growth. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the outcomes of such initiatives can vary significantly depending on the specific local context (Patterson, 2022). In contrast, attempts to replicate this model frequently encounter setbacks when cities prioritize mere visual imitation without adequately accommodating local cultural nuances or engaging with the communities involved (Bailoni, 2014; Dreher, Alaily-Mattar, & Thierstein, 2020; Heidenreich & Plaza, 2015).

Cities such as Valencia exemplify how architecture contributes to the establishment of a robust city brand. In Valencia, the redevelopment of public spaces and the utilization of innovative narratives facilitated the city's resilience during economic downturns (Rius-Ulldemolins & Díaz-Solano, 2023). Conversely, Amsterdam's architecture fosters emotional and imaginative impressions among tourists (Dai, Zhuang, Yan, & Zhang, 2018). On the other hand, Bucharest faces challenges in integrating its historic architecture into branding initiatives, despite the designation of the area as a heritage zone (Prisecaru, 2020). In contrast, Barcelona offers a successful case. It uses a citywide signage system designed by professionals and cultural experts to guide and reinforce its image (Jones & Svejnova, 2017).

In Indonesia, most city branding research focuses on promotional campaigns and public relations strategies. For instance, the "Majestic Banyuwangi" case exemplifies the utilization of tourism media and slogans (Christine & Setyanto, 2021; Fikri, 2017). While some studies investigate the impact of branding on tourist decision-making, few delve into the spatial and architectural dimensions of branding (Efendi, 2017; Jannah, 2014). However, it is evident that a city's physical elements, such as architecture, often exert a more profound influence on shaping its identity compared to media (Clark, Lloyd, Wong, & Jain, 2002; M Kavaratzis, 2009).

The involvement of prominent Indonesian architects such as Yori Antar, Budi Pradono, and Adi Purnomo underscores that city branding transcends the concept of a singular icon. It encompasses a multifaceted narrative that encompasses numerous locations and stakeholders (Arfani, 2019; Desrianto, 2019). Participatory initiatives, such as the Festival Arsitektur Nusantara and public design forums, facilitate emotional connections between individuals and city spaces (Malamud et al., 2022; Torres Zamudio et al., 2021). These endeavors contribute to inclusive branding and have concurrently stimulated Banyuwangi's economic growth (Astro, 2015). Consequently, the city has experienced a surge in tourism, garnered accolades such as the Adipura award, and attained recognition as a World Biosphere Reserve (Agung, 2020; Akmal, 2016).

The Bilbao Effect in Indonesia

Architectural Representation and the New Image of Banyuwangi City

Alya Lailatul Azizah, Susilo Kusdiwanggo

The theoretical framework employed in this study utilizes Hall's "Circuit of Culture" to elucidate the dual nature of buildings as both tangible structures and symbolic representations of culture (Hall, 2020). Urban image theory posits that architecture plays a role in spatial, symbolic, and functional communication (Michalis Kavartzis, 2004). The semiotics of architecture further emphasizes the significance of design elements, such as roof forms and garden layouts, in conveying meanings (Jones & Svejnova, 2017). In the context of Banyuwangi, spatial design rooted in local culture embodies concepts like reterritorialization (Jacek, 2010), which refers to the process of reclaiming and embedding local cultural identity in urban space as a response to globalization, and cultural terraforming (Garfield-Abrams, Corcoran, & Wynn, 2024), a metaphor describing how architecture is used to reshape urban culture and perception to align with new political or economic agendas. These concepts illustrate how architecture actively contributes to transforming and redefining the city's identity.

Banyuwangi's spatial transformation exemplifies the interplay between economic change and culture (Götz et al., 2021). Rapid growth can alter local values and identity. Cultural districts, which integrate local culture with public space and architecture, can foster sustainable creative economies (Sacco, Ferilli, Blessi, & Nuccio, 2013). In this context, meaningful public spaces serve as the nexus connecting identity, economy, and branding (Grzeskow, 2020; Radić, Castillo, & Medrano, 2018).

3. Methods

This study employs a constructivist paradigm, which prioritizes the subjective viewpoints of participants, particularly architects and public space managers, to elucidate the role of architectural representation in the establishment of Banyuwangi's city branding (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This paradigm is well-suited for investigating the symbolic and narrative dimensions of architecture as integral components of urban identity within a multifaceted social and cultural context.

The theoretical framework is constructed through deductive reasoning. It commences with established theories of architectural representation and city branding, which are subsequently applied to Banyuwangi's local context. This deductive approach facilitates the exploration of how architectural strategies developed during the tenure of Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas (2010–2021) are associated with the quality of life and identity transformation.

A descriptive qualitative method employing a narrative strategy is employed to elucidate the experiences of individuals directly involved in the design process. The narratives shared by architects serve as pivotal data points for comprehending the incorporation of local cultural elements and community participation within architectural endeavors (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Banyuwangi Regency in East Java is selected as the study site. With an area of 5,782.50 square kilometers, the region has served as a testing ground for development strategies centered on architecture. Five architectural projects are chosen as observation units, representing both infrastructure and landscape categories: Pendopo Sabha Swagata (2012), Banyuwangi Airport (2016), Grand Watu Dodol (2014), Blambangan Park (2016), and Gandrung Terakota Park (2018) (Figure 1). Details for each site are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Observation Units

No.	Object	Year (Revitalization/Inauguration)	Location	Description
1	Pendopo Sabha Swagata	2012 (revitalization)	Sritanjung Street, Temenggungan, Banyuwangi District	Infrastructure
2	Banyuwangi Airport	2016 (revitalization)	Agung Wilis Street, Jatisari, Blimbingsari District	Infrastructure
3	Grand Watu Dodol	2014 (revitalization)	Banyuwangi–Situbondo Highway, Wongsorejo District	Landscape
4	Blambangan Park	2016 (revitalization)	Diponegoro Street No.2, Kepatihan, Banyuwangi District	Landscape
5	Gandrung Terakota Park	2018 (inaugurated)	Ijen Mountain Slope, Tamansari Village, Licin District	Landscape

The unit of analysis emphasizes design concepts and architectural elements such as the Osing roof shape, local materials, open structures, and landscape arrangements. These elements are interpreted as media for conveying cultural identity in the context of city branding. The social context and political narrative underpinning the project are also examined within architectural representation.

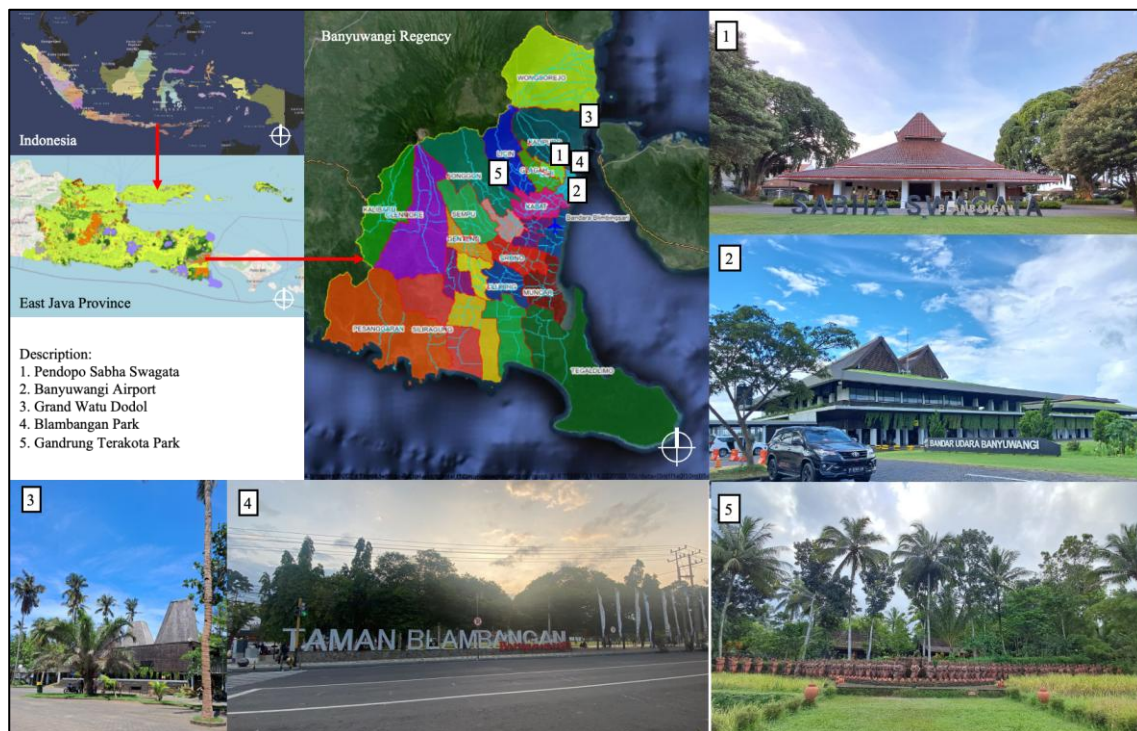


Figure 1. Five architectural objects.

The Bilbao Effect in Indonesia

Architectural Representation and the New Image of Banyuwangi City

Alya Lailatul Azizah, Susilo Kusdiwanggo

Informants were selected through purposive sampling, specifically targeting key figures involved in the design process. The sample comprises five architects and one project manager, all of whom held significant roles in the projects. Their profiles are presented in *Table 2*.

Table 2. Research Informants

No.	Informant Name	Description
1	Adi Purnomo	Architect of Pendopo Sabha, Swagata, and Blambangan Park
2	Yori Antar	Architect of Blambangan Park
3	Hafiz Rhafp	Architect In-Charge (HAP Architect) of Blambangan Park
4	Andra Matin	Architect of the Prayer Pavilion at Pendopo Sabha, Swagata, and Airport
5	Budi Pradono	Architect of Grand Watu Dodol
6	Dedy Sulistyanto	Manager of Gandrung Terakota Park

Data collection used three techniques: (1) in-depth interviews in two stages (initially unstructured, then structured) to explore perceptions and validate findings (James, Thompson-Fawcett, & Hansen, 2016; Maurischa, Fahmi, & Suroso, 2023), (2) document analysis from sources such as Cipta Karya PU archives, published books, media reports, and city policy documents; and (3) field observation with photographic documentation.

The data analysis followed the interactive model comprising data condensation, presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 2014), while the coding process was conducted in stages—open, axial, and selective coding—based on Neuman’s guidelines (Neuman, 2014). Interpretation is conducted through the use of interpretive narratives, which employ three tools: path dependency (the identification of the initial triggers of representation), periodization (the understanding of the chronology of development), and historical contingency (the linking of architecture to the socio-political context during implementation) (Neuman, 2014). This approach conceptualizes architecture as a dynamic entity that contributes to the construction of urban identity.

4. Results

The results of this study are based on qualitative data analysis collected through interviews, field observations, and visual documentation. The data were analyzed using the three-stage approach developed by Miles and Huberman (2014), which consists of data condensation (open coding), information presentation (axial coding), and data conclusion (selective coding). The following three stages provide a comprehensive understanding of how architectural representations in public space projects in Banyuwangi contribute to city branding strategies and the transformation of the city's identity. The code's details are enumerated in *Table 3*.

Table 3. Coding Result

Open Code	Axial Code	Selective Code
Bilbao effect	Bilbao effect	The Bilbao effect in city branding
Culturally embedded architecture		

Open Code	Axial Code	Selective Code	
Cultural potential			
Culturally rich city			
Interest in architecture	Regent's character		
Executive leader			
Visionary leader			
Proactive leader			
Caring leader			
Entrepreneurial-minded leader			
Has strong networks			
Conducting evaluations			Regent's strategic actions
Tourism potential			
Fulfilling tourism needs			
Transforming society through public space			
Activating the beach			
Activating the town square			
Bottom-up approach			
Gradual development			
Providing opportunities			
Architectural approach			
Positioning Banyuwangi			
Knowledge transfer			
Revitalization	Revitalization		
Area-scale revitalization			
Area revitalization to create a new image			
Revitalization without losing original character			
Inspiration from other places			
Inspiration from other objects			
Revitalization of the Pendapa			
Revitalization of the polytechnic hall			
Spaces with personal stories for users			

The Bilbao Effect in Indonesia
 Architectural Representation and the New Image of Banyuwangi City
 Alya Lailatul Azizah, Susilo Kusdiwanggo

Open Code	Axial Code	Selective Code	
Revitalization of Blambangan Hotel	Iconic architecture		
Pendapa as a tourist attraction			
GWD as a destination			
Architecture organizing city mobility			
Branding			
Street furniture as brand identity			
Impact of iconography			
Pendapa as an icon			
Neo-vernacular architecture			
Concept of iconography			
Preservation of Osing architecture			
Design reflecting local uniqueness			
Visitor increase	Economic growth	the transformation of the city's identity from a negative image to a cultural city.	
Economic growth			
Job creation through cultural activities			
Entrepreneurs are pleased	Urban transformat ion		
Many investors attracted			
Receiving awards			
Mindset transformation			
Architects feel appreciated			
Mysticism becomes uniqueness			
From "city of black magic" to "city of culture"			
Cultural representation	Socio- cultural representati on		cultural representation through architecture
Representation of human philosophy			
Representation of the Regent's closeness to the people			
Representation of environmental stewardship			
Representation of Dewi Sri			
Representation of the essence of the Gandrung dance			
Gandrung as Dewi Sri's representation			

Open Code	Axial Code	Selective Code
Representation of a humble society		
Elegant and simple design		
Organic master plan		
Airport roof as rice field continuation	Contextual	
Osing architectural representation	area	
Blambangan Park as a creative zone	representati	
Blambangan Park is a historic area	on	
Community involvement		
Public socialization		
Society needs guidance		
Involving local contractors		
Involving cultural figures		
Discussion with architects		
Architect as advisor		
Architect as visionary		
Aligning with standards		
Architect as translator		
An architect creates efficient and impactful design	Collaborati	
Comfortable design	ve	
Architecture requires programming	representati	
An architect understands city development	on	
Public Works Office as developer		
Policy to preserve culture		
Policy to maintain quality		
Urban design needs regulations		
Implementation difficulties		
Government struggles to translate vision		
The government lacks land ownership		
The government only initiates projects		

The Bilbao Effect in Indonesia

Architectural Representation and the New Image of Banyuwangi City

Alya Lailatul Azizah, Susilo Kusdiwanggo

Data Condensation (Open Coding)

The initial stage of analysis was conducted through open coding, which involved systematically dividing interview narratives into units of meaning to be identified and coded. The data presented herein were obtained from six key informants, namely architects and public space managers involved in the revitalization project in Banyuwangi. The number of codes obtained from each informant ranged from 12 to 44, with a total number of hundreds of codes reflecting the diversity of views on cultural representation, development strategies, economic effects, and the symbolic value of public architecture. This process yielded significant themes, including the Bilbao effect, stakeholder collaboration, area revitalization, and urban image transformation. The investigation placed particular emphasis on architects' perceptions of local identity and on how they manifested it through design, encompassing visual, symbolic, and spatial dimensions.

Presentation of Information (Axial Coding)

By applying axial coding, researchers organized the relationships among codes into 10 main interpretive categories. These categories include the Bilbao effect, leadership character, development strategy, iconic architecture, area revitalization, cultural representation, the role of collaboration, economic growth, and urban transformation. These categories constitute a conceptual framework that elucidates the dynamics of architectural representation within city branding practices in Banyuwangi. A notable example of this phenomenon is the Bilbao effect, which involves the strategic use of architecture to create visual symbols that transform the city's perception. The leadership qualities exhibited by Regent Azwar Anas serve as the cornerstone for the consistent and focused implementation of design strategies. The iconic architecture category underscores the airport and cultural park's role as symbols of local identity, thereby enhancing the city's appeal to both domestic and international tourists. A recurrent theme in the architects' discourses is the notion of cultural representation and collaboration, depicted as the outcome of a symbiotic interaction among local values, leadership vision, and community participation.

Data Conclusion (Selective Coding)

The final stage of analysis is selective coding, which filters three main themes that represent the essence of the research findings, namely: (1) the Bilbao effect in city branding, (2) cultural representation through architecture, and (3) the transformation of the city's identity from a negative image to a cultural city.

The initial theme, the Bilbao effect in city branding, demonstrates that Banyuwangi's development strategy exhibits parallels with the Bilbao effect phenomenon. A similar phenomenon was observed in Bilbao, where the construction of the Guggenheim Museum catalyzed urban transformation. Similarly, Banyuwangi employs iconic architecture as a strategic tool for its own urban evolution. The construction of Banyuwangi Airport and Gandrung Terakota Park has emerged as a novel visual symbol, conveying both local identity and modernity. Collaboration with national architects has resulted in the strategic placement of symbols at the city's entrance gates. This approach is consistent with the concept of urban cultural terraforming, as described by Garfield-Abrams et al. (2024). In this model, external forces and local elites shape cultural representations to support investment and tourist appeal. Although there is a risk of marginalizing authentic cultural values, this strategy significantly enhances the city's visibility within regional and global networks. As Sacco et al. (2013) explain, integrating culture into the local economy has been

shown to strengthen the accumulation of symbolic capital. This, in turn, has been shown to play a crucial role in driving social growth and sustainable urban development.

The second theme, cultural representation through architecture, emphasizes that public architecture in Banyuwangi is designed not only for function and aesthetics, but also to convey local cultural values, particularly the ethnic identity of the Osing people. This representation is manifest in the design of the Banyuwangi Airport roof, which evokes the traditional Osing house, and in the statue of Dewi Sri in the Gandrung Terakota Park, which symbolizes the agrarian and spiritual values of the community. This symbolic representation aligns with the principle of reterritorialization (Jacek, 2010), where in local communities fortify their identity through architectural symbols to preserve their cultural heritage amidst the forces of modernization. The reorganization of space and time can generate new environments for social interaction, strengthening local communities (Oßenbrügge, Pohl, & Vogelpohl, 2009). In this context, architecture functions as a medium for symbolic articulation, thereby reinforcing emotional bonds between the community and their living environment. Consequently, this fosters a new social order that supports community cohesion (Fine, 2010).

The third theme, the transformation of the city's identity from a negative image to a cultural city, marks a shift in Banyuwangi's public narrative from a mystical, marginalized city to a center of progressive culture. This transformation is realized through the revitalization of public spaces such as Grand Watu Dodol (GWD) and Blambangan Park, which function as communal spaces and cultural performance centers. This strategy aligns with the theoretical framework of spatial transformation (Surya, 2020), which posits that alterations in spatial structure can influence the social formation of a community. This approach transforms public spaces into instruments of education, social interaction, and the articulation of cultural values. The transformation of the city's image is also influenced by social mobility and selective migration, which, according to Götz et al. (2021), can shape a community's cultural character. Consequently, the city's image reflects its intricate and multifaceted social dynamics. Rius-Ulldemolins and Jiménez (2016) posit that in the era of globalization, culture functions not merely as an aesthetic embellishment but also as a strategic instrument for consumption and territorial branding, thereby enabling cities to enhance their competitiveness on the global stage.

The results of this study demonstrate that architectural representation is a significant factor in transforming urban images and identities. The public architecture projects examined in this study offer design innovations and convey strong cultural narratives. These projects also strengthen the city's appeal and change the perceptions of both local and international communities. These findings underscore the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in city branding studies, integrating spatial, cultural, and economic analyses to understand the complexity of contemporary urban identity formation.

5. Discussion

This discussion interprets the research findings employing three narrative tools: path dependency, periodization, and historical contingency. These tools elucidate the dynamics of architectural representation within Banyuwangi's city branding strategy. The analysis utilizes three case studies to illustrate how the city's spatial and cultural identity has evolved—from planning and implementation to public perception and social impact. The discussion adheres to the three salient themes identified during selective coding: the Bilbao

The Bilbao Effect in Indonesia

Architectural Representation and the New Image of Banyuwangi City

Alya Lailatul Azizah, Susilo Kusdiwanggo

effect in city branding, cultural representation through architecture, and urban identity transformation.

Path Dependency: The Bilbao Effect and Architectural Strategy

Architect Andra Matin emphasized that the design of Banyuwangi Airport sought to “integrate the contemporary functionality of an airport with the traditional essence of the Osing people,” underscoring how iconic infrastructure can encapsulate local values while simultaneously serving broader economic objectives. The Bilbao Effect serves as the primary inspiration for Banyuwangi’s urban development strategy. This concept, exemplified by the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, elucidates how iconic structures can transform a city’s image and economy (Franklin, 2016; Monge, de Jong, & Bilmes, 2022; Wouters, 2022). In Banyuwangi, Regent Azwar Anas embraced analogous principles by collaborating with esteemed Indonesian architects, including Andra Matin, Adi Purnomo, Budi Pradono, and Yori Antar, to construct edifices that resonate with local identity.

The city implemented this strategy incrementally, prioritizing projects and allocating resources accordingly. Notable examples include Banyuwangi Airport and Grand Watu Dodol, which were conceptualized as visual gateways to exhibit Osing cultural heritage. The incorporation of local roof forms, materials, and landscapes reinforces cultural symbolism. As per Hall’s theory (2020), such a design not only encompasses visual aesthetics but also conveys political and ideological messages, including the leadership’s close association with the community. International recognition, such as the Aga Khan Award, has further elevated the city’s reputation for culturally sensitive design.

Periodization: The Evolution of Branding and Cultural Representation

Yori Antar, architect of Blambangan Park, noted that the project was envisioned not just as a green space but as a “cultural spine” of the city, where traditional narratives could coexist with contemporary public life. Urban transformation in Banyuwangi did not occur instantaneously. It unfolded through a series of policy and spatial developments. Regulations such as Perbup No. 11/2019 and No. 71/2019 formally integrated Osing architecture and established quality standards for public facilities and tourism infrastructure (Peraturan Bupati Banyuwangi, 2019)

Within this policy framework, iconic architecture was strategically placed in prominent public spaces, including Sabha Swagata Hall, Banyuwangi Airport, and Blambangan Park. These spaces serve multifaceted purposes: administration, recreation, cultural education, and storytelling. This storytelling aspect is pivotal in shaping urban identity through spatial design (Michalis Kavartzis, 2004; Riza, Doratli, & Fasli, 2012). Employing local materials such as ulin wood and open structural systems embodies values of simplicity and sustainability.

Symbols such as the Dewi Sri statue at Gandrung Terakota Park exemplify the Osing community’s agrarian and spiritual heritage. This aligns with the scholarly perspectives of previous researchers who perceive architecture not merely as a backdrop for culture but as culture itself (Radić et al., 2018; Zakharchuk, 2021). In this context, architecture serves as a conduit for transmitting historical, cultural, and aspirational significance.

Historical Contingency: City Identity and Social Change

According to Dedy Sulistyanto, manager of Gandrung Terakota Park, the incorporation of Dewi Sri symbolism was “intended to root the tourism experience in spiritual memory and agrarian identity, not just spectacle.” Banyuwangi’s identity

transformation is intricately linked to its historical background, which encompasses associations with mysticism and conflict. The city's contemporary image was constructed through cultural events and the revitalization of public spaces. These interventions significantly altered the city's perception, transitioning from marginal to progressive. This case exemplifies the efficacy of representational strategies in redefining urban image (Mihalis Kavartzis & Ashworth, 2005).

Social mobility and migration significantly impact identity transformation. Götz et al. (2021) discovered that escalating property values, enhanced services, and cultural symbols reshape community character. This corroborates the notion that city branding transcends mere image – it also influences economic and social frameworks. Banyuwangi serves as an illustrative case study demonstrating how branding through architecture and culture can augment local income, enhance the quality of life, and bolster global competitiveness (Kotler & Gertner, 2007).

In summary, Banyuwangi's branding aligns with Hall's (2020) Circuit of Culture framework. The Circuit of Culture is a theoretical model introduced by Hall (2020) that explains how cultural meaning is shaped through five interrelated processes: representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation. Architecture represents identity, public spaces facilitate cultural production, festivals serve as avenues for cultural consumption, and regulations establish a structured framework. This cyclical process sustains the city's cultural brand.

In Banyuwangi, city branding is guided by leadership vision, spatial planning, and cultural engagement. The Bilbao effect serves as an inspiration for this approach, but its success hinges on the effective integration of local identity into the design. By incorporating architectural narratives into public spaces, the city can achieve a dual impact: shaping public perception and fostering a deeper emotional connection among residents. As elucidated by Madanipour (2013) and Jones & Svejnova (2017), city identity undergoes evolution through architecture, planning, and social interaction.

Banyuwangi's experience underscores the significance of interdisciplinary approaches in comprehending and shaping urban identity. The study provides valuable insights for other cities seeking to transform their image through context-aware, collaborative, and culturally grounded spatial strategies.

6. Conclusion

This study affirms that architectural representation plays a pivotal role in shaping the identity of cities in transformation. In Banyuwangi, architecture has served not only as a physical and visual marker but also as a strategic medium for cultural, political, and social communication. The findings highlight three key insights: *first*, the adaptation of the "Bilbao Effect" in Banyuwangi demonstrates that localized iconic architecture can generate powerful visual symbols that support broader city branding efforts, as exemplified in Banyuwangi Airport and Gandrung Terakota Park. *Second*, integrating Osing cultural elements – such as traditional roof forms, symbolic ornaments, and spatial layouts – into public architecture embeds cultural memory in the urban landscape and bolsters collective identity. *Third*, the shift in Banyuwangi's image from a stigmatized to a culturally progressive city has been driven by inclusive spatial revitalization and participatory design, thereby reinforcing architecture's role in cultural production. Overall, the research underscores the significance of combining spatial design, cultural narratives, and inclusive

The Bilbao Effect in Indonesia

Architectural Representation and the New Image of Banyuwangi City

Alya Lailatul Azizah, Susilo Kusdiwanggo

governance. Architecture, therefore, transcends aesthetics – it evolves into a transformative language. Future research should further investigate the public's reception and co-creation in sustaining culturally meaningful urban identities.

Acknowledgment

This research was conducted at my own expense and with non-binding support. I would like to express my gratitude to all those who provided assistance, input, and moral support during this research process. I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, colleagues, and family for their unwavering encouragement and support throughout this process.

References

- Affan, H. (2023). Pembantaian “dukun santet” 1998-1999 di Banyuwangi: ‘Ada tanda silang, lampu tiba-tiba mati, dan bapak saya dibunuh’ – Indonesia. Retrieved July 2, 2025, from BBC News website: <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-6480697>
- Agung. (2020). Banyuwangi Dianggap Sukses Kembangkan Pariwisata, Yuk Kita Contoh! Retrieved March 23, 2025, from <https://www.harianproperty.com/http://www.harianproperty.com/Wisata/details/1347/Banyuwangi-Dianggap-Sukses-Kembangkan-Pariwisata-Yuk-Kita-Contoh>
- Akmal, P. (2016). Bupati Anas Sulap Banyuwangi dengan Green Architecture.
- Arfani, F. (2019). Kemenpar rekomendasikan program “Kawan” di Festival Arsitektur Nusantara. Retrieved June 15, 2025, from Antara News website: <https://www.antarane.ws.com/berita/809876/kemenpar-rekomendasikan-program-kawan-di-festival-arsitektur-nusantara>
- Astro, M. M. (2015). Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Banyuwangi Lampau Rata-rata Jatim. Retrieved June 6, 2025, from ANTARA News Jawa Timur website: <https://jatim.antarane.ws.com/berita/168934/pertumbuhan-ekonomi-banyuwangi-lampau-rata-rata-jatim>
- Bailoni, M. (2014). The renewal of old industrial areas through culture in British cities: a model in crisis? *Belgeo: Revue Belge de Géographie*, (1). <https://doi.org/https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-84921670232&partnerID=40&md5=9ab707759bdca87c1904add6bf09a60d>
- Caesario, E. B. (2016). Penataan Kota: Resep Banyuwangi Jadi Yang Terbaik. Retrieved July 2, 2025, from [Bisnis.com website: https://ekonomi.bisnis.com/read/20160318/45/529406/penataan-kota-resep-banyuwangi-jadi-yang-terbaik](https://ekonomi.bisnis.com/read/20160318/45/529406/penataan-kota-resep-banyuwangi-jadi-yang-terbaik)
- Cherkes, B., Idak, Y., & Rakochyi, Y. (2024). Architectural and urban planning context of the physical dimension of urban identity. *Architectural Studies*, 2(10), 86-99. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.56318/as/2.2024.86>
- Christine, N., & Setyanto, Y. (2021). PR Function in City Branding. *International Conference on Economics, Business, Social, and Humanities (ICEBSH 2021)*, 857-862. Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210805.135>
- Clark, T. N., Lloyd, R., Wong, K. K., & Jain, P. (2002). Amenities drive urban growth. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 24(5), 492-515. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9906.00134>

- Costa, M., & Carneiro, M. J. (2021). The influence of interpretation on learning about architectural heritage and on the perception of cultural significance. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 19(2), 230–249. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2020.1737705>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications. Retrieved from <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=335ZDwAAQBAJ>
- Dai, T., Zhuang, T., Yan, J., & Zhang, T. (2018). From landscape to mindscape: Spatial narration of touristic Amsterdam. *Sustainability*, 10(8), 2623. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/su10082623>
- Desrianto, M. (2019). Lewat Buku, Bupati Anas Beberkan Strategi Memimpin Banyuwangi. Retrieved June 15, 2025, from KOMPAS.com website: <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2019/10/14/16273151/lewat-buku-bupati-anas-beberkan-strategi-memimpin-banyuwangi>
- Dreher, J., Alaily-Mattar, N., & Thierstein, A. (2020). Star architecture projects: The assessment of spatial economic effects by means of a spatial incidence analysis. *Raumforschung Und Raumordnung/Spatial Research and Planning*, 78(5), 439–453. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2478/rara-2020-0029>
- Efendi, D. (2017). Branding Majestic Banyuwangi Jangan Terbatas pada Logo. Retrieved from TIMES Indonesia. website: <https://timesindonesia.co.id/peristiwa-daerah/154070/branding-majestic-banyuwangi-jangan-terbatas-pada-logo>
- El Messeidy, R. (2019). Architecture and city branding: Role of iconic buildings. *Engineering Research Journal*, 163, 144–155. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21608/ERJ.2019.122520>
- Fanani, A. (2019). Saat Arsitek Kondang Kumpul di Festival Arsitektur Nusantara di Banyuwangi. Retrieved June 15, 2025, from detiknews website: <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-timur/d-4467808/saat-arsitek-kondang-kumpul-di-festival-arsitektur-nusantara-di-banyuwangi>
- Fikri, H. (2017). Inovasi Pemerintahan Kabupaten Banyuwangi Melalui City Branding “The Sunrise Of Java” Sebagai Strategi Pemasaran Pariwisata. *Aristo*, 5(2), 332–344. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24269/aristo.v/1.2017.6>
- Filatova, T., Wei, M., Feng, H., Orozonova, A., & Kashymbekov, A. (2024). Concepts and Methods of Research on the Visual Image of the City. *AIS-Architecture Image Studies*, 5(2), 18–33. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.48619/ais.v5i2.956>
- Fine, G. A. (2010). The Sociology of the Local: Action and its Publics. *Sociological Theory*, 28(4), 355–376. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9558.2010.01380.x>
- Forina Lestari, M., Dali, M. D., & Che-Ha, N. (2020). Local identity consideration in maintaining place branding sustainability the case of Indonesia. *Management*, 5(19), 14–29. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35631/JTHEM.519002>
- Franklin, A. (2016). Journeys to the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao: towards a revised Bilbao effect. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 59, 79–92. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2016.04.001>

The Bilbao Effect in Indonesia

Architectural Representation and the New Image of Banyuwangi City

Alya Lailatul Azizah, Susilo Kusdiwanggo

- Garfield-Abrams, J. L., Corcoran, T., & Wynn, J. R. (2024). The (Cultural) War Of The Worlds:Framing Urban Redevelopment as 'Terraforming.' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 48(1), 53–73. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.13216>
- Giorgi, E., Valderrey, F., & Montoya, M. A. (2022). Cultural tourism and the economic Recovery of cities post COVID-19. In *COVID-19 and Cities: Experiences, Responses, and Uncertainties* (pp. 219–234). Springer.
- Götz, F. M., Ebert, T., Gosling, S. D., Obschonka, M., Potter, J., & Rentfrow, P. J. (2021). Local Housing Market Dynamics Predict Rapid Shifts in Cultural Openness: A 9-Year Study Across 199 Cities. *American Psychologist*, 76(6), 947–961. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000812>
- Grześkow, I. (2020). The role of green public spaces of the old canal in downtown Bydgoszcz and its impact on the city's cultural landscape in 1773 – 1971. *IOP Conf. Ser. Mater. Sci. Eng.* <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899X/960/2/022030>
- Hall, S. (2020). The work of representation. In *The applied theatre reader* (pp. 74–76). Routledge.
- Heidenreich, M., & Plaza, B. (2015). Renewal through culture? The role of museums in the renewal of industrial regions in Europe. *European Planning Studies*, 23(8), 1441–1455. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2013.817544>
- Jacek, N. (2010). Reorganisation of ethnic space in the context of the challenges of globalisation. *Polish Sociological Review*, 169(1), 87–98. Retrieved from <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=75251>.
- Jakupi, A., & Jashari-Kajtazi, T. (2018). Architectural drawing as a medium of communication, education and interaction with the community; Case study Prishtina, Kosovo. *Pollack Periodica*, 13(1), 237–246. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1556/606.2018.13.1.21>
- James, K., Thompson-Fawcett, M., & Hansen, C. J. (2016). Transformations in identity, governance, and planning: The case of the small city. *Urban Studies*, 53(6), 1162–1177. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098015571060>
- Jannah, B. (2014). Pengaruh City Branding Dan City Image Terhadap Keputusan Berkunjung Wisatawan Ke Banyuwangi. *Jurnal Administrasi Bisnis*, 17(1).
- Jones, C., & Svejenova, S. (2017). The architecture of city identities: A multimodal study of Barcelona and Boston. In *Multimodality, meaning, and institutions* (Vol. 54, pp. 203–234). Emerald Publishing Limited. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0733-558X2017000054B007>
- Kandemir, O. (2017). Architectural and urban identity transformation of Eskisehir-an Anatolian city. *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, 245(4), 42031. IOP Publishing. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899X/245/4/042031>
- Kavaratzis, M. (2009). Cities and their brands: Lessons from corporate branding. , 5(1), 26–37. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 5(1), 26–37. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1057/pb.2008.3>
- Kavaratzis, Michalis. (2004). From city marketing to city branding: Towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands. *Place Branding*, 1(1), 58–73.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.pb.5990005>

- Kavaratzis, Mihalis, & Ashworth, G. J. (2005). City branding: an effective assertion of identity or a transitory marketing trick? *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 96(5), 506–514. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9663.2005.00482.x>
- Kotler, P., & Gertner, D. (2007). Country as brand, product and beyond: A place marketing and brand management perspective. In *Destination branding* (pp. 55–71). Routledge. Retrieved from <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780080477206-13/country-brand-product-beyond-place-marketing-brand-management-perspective-philip-kotler-david-gertner>
- Lippuner, R., & Werlen, B. (n.d.). Regional cultures and globalized lifestyles. *Geographische Rundschau*, 59(7–8), 22–27.
- Lorente, J. P. (2024). Reviewing the “Bilbao effect” inside and beyond the Guggenheim: Its coming of age in sprawling cultural landscapes. *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 67(2), 365–379. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12578>
- Madanipour, A. (2013). The identity of the city. In *City Project and Public Space* (pp. 49–63). Springer. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-6037-0_3
- Malamud, P., Neves, M., & Patrocinio, G. (2022). The Role of Designers in City Branding Process: A Conceptual Model. *Meeting of Research in Music, Arts and Design*, 3–16. Springer. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-09659-4_1
- Maurischa, S. D., Fahmi, F. Z., & Suroso, D. S. A. (2023). Transformative resilience: Transformation, resilience and capacity of coastal communities in facing disasters in two Indonesian villages. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 88, 103615. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2023.103615>
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: a methods sourcebook*. SAGE Publications Inc. Retrieved from <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=p0wXBAAQBAJ>
- Monge, F., de Jong, J., & Bilmes, L. (2022). *The “Bilbao Effect” The Collaborative Architecture that Powered Bilbao’s Urban Revival*. *Educator Guide, Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative*. United States of America. <https://doi.org/https://coilink.org/20.500.12592/0j9qm1>
- Neuman, W. L. (2014). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches: Pearson New International Edition*. Pearson Education Limited. Retrieved from <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=AaJk0AEACAAJ>
- Oßenbrügge, J., Pohl, T., & Vogelpohl, A. (2009). Disenclosed time regimes and spatial concentrations of economies. The creative sector in Hamburg’s Schanzenviertel from a time-geographical perspective. *Zeitschrift Für Wirtschaftsgeographie*, 53(4), 249–263. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/11858/00-001M-0000-0018-1DE2-0>.
- Peraturan Bupati Banyuwangi. *Peraturan Bupati Banyuwangi*. , Pub. L. No. No 71 Tahun 2019 tentang Jenis Usaha Penyediaan Akomodasi. Bupati Banyuwangi Provinsi Jawa Timur. (2019). Indonesia.

The Bilbao Effect in Indonesia

Architectural Representation and the New Image of Banyuwangi City

Alya Lailatul Azizah, Susilo Kusdiwanggo

- Prilenska, V. (2012). City Branding as a Tool for Urban Regeneration: Towards a Theoretical Framework. *Architecture & Urban Planning*, (6). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.7250/aup.2012.002>
- Prisecaru, D. A. (2020). *Bucharest in between recognizing and managing heritage buildings*. 2749–2755). University of Cantabria - Building Technology R&D Group. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85100433753&partnerID=40&md5=8eed411b1ecff6fa13cc53879b424710>
- Radić, S., Castillo, E., & Medrano, G. (2018). Teatro Regional del bi obío. *ARQ*, 99, 28–29. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4067/S0717-69962018000200028>
- Rius-Ulldemolins, J., & Díaz-Solano, P. (2023). Local political change, the neo-creative city paradigm and the mutations of Valencian cultural branding. *City, Culture and Society*, 34, 100535. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2023.100535>
- Rius-Ulldemolins, J., & Posso Jiménez, L. (2016). Cultura, transformación urbana y empoderamiento ciudadano frente a la gentrificación: Comparación entre el caso de Getsemaní (Cartagena de Indias) y el Raval (Barcelona). *EURE (Santiago)*, 42(126), 97–122. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4067/S0250-71612016000200005>
- Riza, M., Doratli, N., & Fasli, M. (2012). City Branding and Identity. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 35, 293–300. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.02.091>
- Roudbari, S. (2021). Crowdsourced and crowd-pleasing: the new architectural awards and the city. In *Urban Transformations through Exceptional Architecture* (pp. 42–58). Routledge. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2017.1340799>
- Sacco, P. L., Ferilli, G., Blessi, G. T., & Nuccio, M. (2013). Culture as an engine of local development processes: System-wide cultural districts I. *Theory, Growth and Change*, 44(4), 555–570. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/grow.12020>
- Surya, B. (2020). Natural resource conservation based on community economic empowerment: Perspectives on watershed management and slum settlements in Makassar City, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. *Land*, 9(4). <https://doi.org/10.3390/land9040104>
- Torres Zamudio, M., González Castro, Y., & Manzano Durán, O. (2021). Methodological elements to design a city branding with the use of grounded theory. *Cuadernos de Gestión*, 21(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5295/cdg.191093mt>
- Wouters, M. (2022). Reinventing Bilbao, the story of the Bilbao Effect. In *Innovating Strategies and Solutions for Urban Performance and Regeneration* (pp. 37–48). Springer. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-98187-7_4
- Zakharchuk, M. G. (2021). Architectural practices in the formation of a subject-spatial environment: Current discourses. *IOP Conf. Ser. Earth Environ. Sci*, 751(1), 012059. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/751/1/012059>