

BRANDING COLLECTIVE ACTIONS: THE ANALYSIS OF VISUAL SEMIOTICS USED BY ACTIVE GROUPS WITHIN THE WALLS OF SOUTH NICOSIA, CYPRUS

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Introduction

Kotler et al. (2015) define branding as the action of “endowing products and services with the power of a brand”. Brand identity, then, is the process of giving meaning to specific products by creating and shaping a brand in consumers’ minds. Brand perception is how customers view a brand. Where brand identity is the image that a brand is trying to build, brand perception is the current image that exists in the minds of its audience.

This article looks at collective actions within the walled part of South Nicosia, Cyprus, and examines how they brand themselves and their logos, and by doing so affect and transform the narrative of the urban environment. Collective actions are defined by the common goals within a group of people. The collective actions that we refer to are mainly defined by what is called unimodality, which is a common objective shared by participants. Such commonality may take the form of beliefs, cognitive frames or stories and it is considered the thing that binds the members of the group and reflects their common goals (R. Lejano et al., 2017). Collective actions can be analysed visually by how they manifest themselves and how they are perceived publicly. The linguistic landscape they act upon is, in turn, formed through the various visual symbols each collective group chooses and by the ways the media chooses to broadcast them, all of which ultimately creates brand perception in their audience. For the purposes of this study, by branding we mean the visual identities created by groups under discussion, including the logotypes, symbols and slogans they use, as well as the linguistic landscapes they create. We will also touch upon brand perception: how the audience, in this case the citizens, the political