



# Investigating brand archetypes: unveiling the perceived image of Jabal Al-Weibdeh neighborhood

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## Abstract

The study aims to explore and investigate human traits in places, drawing from the concept of brand archetypes introduced by Carl Jung. Looking at the city of Amman as the main brand and Jabal Al-Weibdeh neighborhood as a sub-brand, it questions the conventional approach of creating a single umbrella city brand and advocates for a Selective Endorsed brand architecture strategy that embraces the diversity of the city's brand and allows for a customized approach to place branding. The paper taps into the place brand image, as perceived by the community, with a specific focus on exploring brand archetypes in neighborhoods through a "bottom-up" approach. This will ultimately aid city officials in understanding place brand making to facilitate alignment of the perceived brand image with the intended brand identity. The brand archetype was identified through mixed research methods, including interviews and surveys. Findings demonstrate the identification of brand archetypes in places, revealing the potential emergence of distinct archetypes within neighborhoods, different from those of the city. Additionally, the findings reveal a correlation between the community's narratives and their emotional attachment to the place, influencing the perceived brand archetypes. This emphasizes the need for a customized approach to city branding, which recognizes and highlights key neighborhoods, by acknowledging the community's role in comprehending the place brand image.

**Keywords** Place branding · Brand archetype · Neighborhood branding · Brand image · Brand architecture

## Introduction

While numerous studies have examined the brand personality of traditional product brands, there is a growing need to extend branding concepts to non-traditional products like places. However, limited to no research has explored the application of brand archetypes to places, especially within cases in fast-growing cities like Amman.

The concept of a place can be viewed within a hierarchical framework of geographical entities, such as nations, countries, cities, districts, and neighborhoods. A fundamental characteristic of a place is its concentric nature, where

smaller places are nested within larger ones (Lewicka 2010). It is suggested that the identities of smaller-scale places are encompassed by the identities of larger-scale places. Comprehending the identity of a place often requires an examination of its connections to other places (Kalandides 2011).

Place branding and place marketing can occur at various levels and different types of places (Ashworth & Voogd 1990; Eshuis et al. 2014). The objective of branding is to enhance the worth of a certain product, service, or organization. The goal of place branding, when applied to geographical locations, is to enhance the overall value of the particular region in a comprehensive manner (Boisen et al. 2011).

To fully comprehend the extensive implications of place branding across different geographical tiers, it is imperative to adopt a more abstract conceptualization of place. Geographical entities, ranging from neighborhoods and districts to tourist sites, cities, regions, and countries, are often strategically chosen for branding purposes. While a city encompasses diverse locations and places within its boundaries, certain locations are frequently selected deliberately to shape the city's overall image. Despite this, the significance of neighborhoods in place branding is

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frequently overlooked, as most research and practice tend to focus on broader geographic scales such as countries, regions, or cities within the fields of marketing, urban planning, and tourism (Acharya & Rahman 2016; Lewicka 2010; Oguztimur & Akturan 2015).

However, neighborhoods offer a chance to establish an authentic and distinct identity since they possess unique characteristics, resources, and narratives. Understanding neighborhood identity can assist city brand planners in creating a stronger attachment to both the neighborhood and the city (Sadeque et al. 2020).

It is crucial for residents to align with the perceived image of their area in order to live the brand. Otherwise, a gap between the image and reality can lead to discord when tourists, investors, or potential businesses realize that the projected image does not match the actual situation (Zouganeli et al. 2012). When local inhabitants establish a bond with the place brand, they are more inclined to adopt a favorable perspective towards the brand and actively contribute to endorsing the branded offerings. Internal stakeholders can strive to measure the voice within, reflecting residents' perceptions and emotions towards their place (Oliver et al. 2013).

In this paper, our primary investigation focuses on the concept of brand archetypes within the context of places as perceived by the community. The study addresses two primary research questions:

1. Do people's narratives about a place match its brand image and help identify its brand archetype?
2. To what extent is there selectivity in branding specific neighborhoods within cities, and can a neighborhood develop a unique identity distinct from the city's overall brand?

We implemented a structured approach aimed at identifying the brand archetypes of the neighborhood through the analysis of stories and narratives of residents, ex-residents, and local visitors. Employing a "bottom-up" perspective, we explored a neighborhood rich in cultural heritage located in Amman, Jordan, using methods such as surveys, observation, and interviews.

This research addresses several key inquiries. Firstly, we explore the humanization of places and investigate the applicability of brand archetypes to them. Our study illustrates how the local community attributes human characteristics to place brands, shedding light on the intricate relationship between people's narratives and brand image. Secondly, we examine selectivity in place branding and discuss city brand architecture strategies. Rather than advocating for an umbrella brand architecture strategy, the study proposes adopting a Selective Endorsed brand architecture strategy, which recognizes the unique individuality of specific neighborhoods within a city. This approach offers an authentic

representation endorsed by the city's brand, contributing to a sophisticated understanding of place branding dynamics.

Overall, our research contributes by highlighting the potential relevance of brand archetypes to places and their connection to peoples narratives, and advocating for the use of a Selective Endorsed brand architectural strategy in place branding.

## Literature review

### Branding: concept and perception

Brands serve as markers to facilitate consumer choices by promising a certain level of quality, reducing risk, and building trust between consumers and the brand (Keller & Lehmann 2006). Keller describes the "good name" or reputation of a brand as a network of associations in consumers' minds, termed brand knowledge. Understanding a brand involves the construction of knowledge through two key aspects: brand awareness, which measures the extent of customers' familiarity with all aspects of a brand, and brand image, defined as the perceptions about a brand as shaped by the brand associations stored in consumers' minds (Keller 1993, 2003). Brand personality holds particular significance for brand image as it reflects the emotional side of this conceptual category (Kaplan et al. 2010).

Branding has gained widespread recognition as a powerful tool for companies to enhance their competitive advantage and create value for both producers and consumers (Keller 2003). This strategic importance of branding has sparked numerous studies exploring various branding aspects and introducing concepts such as brand image, brand identity, and brand personality (Aaker 2012; Carpenter et al. 1994; Kapferer 2012; Upshaw 1995). The expansion of branding's scope has led to efforts to brand not only products and services but also places, individuals, and ideologies (Hankinson 2004). Within this context, destination branding has received significant attention, particularly regarding the impact of destination brand image on travel choices (Gallarza et al. 2002).

### Branding in cities and places

The city's brand, like products, is condensed into a representational form—a logo, slogan, and/or symbol—that recalls the values associated with the city's brand and connects it with particular meanings (Avraham 2004; Dinnie 2011). However, place branding extends beyond mere visuals; it should represent, engage, and activate the people of the location (Salzman 2016).

Branding now encompasses the developmental aspects of cities and regions, which are crucial for boosting economies



and fostering stronger connections with communities. For instance, cities like Barcelona strategically position themselves as cultural and architectural gems, attracting tourists and investments. Similarly, cities such as New York City have mastered the art of place branding by highlighting the unique identities of their neighborhoods, like Greenwich Village, celebrated for its bohemian ambiance, and historic brownstone buildings. This reflects the need for cities to define their identity and uphold desired standards of quality. However, place branding is notably more complex than branding products, as it involves various factors such as geography, tourist attractions, natural resources, local products, residents' characteristics, institutions, and infrastructure (Dinnie 2004; Fan 2006).

### Place branding

In place branding, some researchers have raised significant criticisms regarding the definition of a brand according to the American Marketing Association (2015). This definition, which defines a brand as a "name, term, sign, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers," has been seen as overly restrictive for application in contexts involving complex structures like places (Ashworth & Kavaratzis 2009; Govers 2013). Though it is argued that the characteristics of city branding are similar to those of branding for products or services (Anholt 2006; Boisen et al. 2011).

One of the frequently cited definitions, as articulated by Zenker & Braun 2010a, 2010b, focuses on branding in the context of places. According to their definition, a place brand is a set of connections formed in a consumer's mind, derived from what they see, hear, and experience about a location. This perception is shaped by the goals, messaging, values, and collective culture of those involved with the place, as well as the overarching design of the location itself. Place brands are essentially about which distinctive characteristics of the place's identity are included and excluded in the communication (Belabas et al. 2020). The development of brands hence goes beyond the development of captivating logos (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2007).

Place brands are shaped by various forms of communication, including verbal, visual, and behavioral expressions. These expressions are manifested, in part, through the overall culture of the place and the involvement of its key stakeholders (Zenker & Braun 2010a, 2010b). The primary objective of place branding is to strategically shape and construct an image within the consciousness of both external and internal target audiences by weaving narratives and associations about the place. Different target groups have different place brand images based on varying levels of brand knowledge, adding to the complexity of place branding (Zenker and Beckmann 2013).

Ashworth (2008) highlights key elements from product branding that are applicable to place branding: brand identity, brand positioning, and brand image. According to Ashworth (2008), effective place brand management involves ongoing development of identity and positioning, while monitoring and measuring the brand image. Adjustments to improve brand image may be necessary (Ashworth 2008).

### City branding: the city as a large corporation

Brand architecture refers to the organizational structure of a brand portfolio, which establishes the responsibilities and interactions between brands and distinct product-market contexts (David Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2012). Widely utilized in complex brand management models, brand architecture demonstrates hierarchical arrangements of brands within a corporate framework, with tailored strategies for diverse target audiences (Aaker 2004). It aids businesses in determining resource allocation and brand relationships within the organization.

Brand architecture is about the relationships between different brands in the same portfolio, and how you coordinate various sub-brands under one name (Sevin 2018). In the context of place branding, brand architecture involves consideration of how geographic scalar levels are linked (or not) through name awareness, association, and image (Govers 2015). Drawing parallels between cities and businesses, Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) find that both comprise multiple sub-identities that, when efficiently managed, coexist harmoniously. City branding integrates diverse images to create a cohesive brand, often referred to as the 'umbrella brand' (Dinnie 2011), aligning with the city's ideals and its citizens uniqueness (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005).

Developing an umbrella brand is a multifaceted endeavor, aiming to harmonize the vision, image, and culture of the city with those of its sub-communities (Freire 2011). Wally Olins outlined three basic brand portfolio strategies: monolithic, endorsed, and branded strategies (Olins 1989). The monolithic strategy consists of a single dominant corporate umbrella brand; the endorsed strategy includes individual brands with their own names and identities but are endorsed by the parent brand; and the branded "house of brands" strategy comprises individual brand identities that stand alone without the endorsement of the parent brand (Olins 1989). Cities require intricate brand architectures resembling corporate hierarchies to cater to diverse target groups, with strategies extending beyond products to include place brands (Iversen & Hem 2008; Kotler & Gertner 2002; Uggla 2006).

Place branding selectively includes certain areas while excluding others, emphasizing prominent neighborhoods, city centers, and business districts (Boisen et al. 2011). Operating across overlapping levels, place branding targets different groups based on strategic decisions by involved



institutions. Neighborhoods within cities can find themselves in competition with other Neighborhoods in cities within the country, or cities in competition with other cities within the country; they can launch their own initiatives. It is no longer possible to consider the national brand to be an umbrella brand for the regions, and the regions to be umbrella brands for their cities. The hierarchy involved in place branding is complex (Boisen et al. 2011).

In this complex hierarchy of place branding, the branding of a key neighborhood doesn't necessarily have to overshadow the city's brand, or even adopt the same strategy. When a neighborhood develops its own distinct brand identity, it adds depth and diversity to the city's overall brand, attracting different demographics and contributing to the city's vibrancy (Sadeque et al. 2020). Rather than competing with the city's brand, strategically branded neighborhoods can enhance it, further enriching the overall brand landscape.

## Brand attributes for articulating identity and brand image

### Adapting brand personality and identity development

Although brands are essentially inanimate, consumers frequently attribute human-like traits to them for ease of expression. The perceived personality of a brand significantly impacts brand choice, as consumers seek brands that align with their own identity (Belk 1988; Schiffman & Kanuk 2004; Sirgy 1982). Plummer (2003) argued that brand personality is a key factor in understanding why consumers choose particular brands (brand preference). He emphasized that brands could display personality traits similar to those of individuals, allowing companies to tailor their marketing approaches to connect with customers who share similar personality characteristics with the brand.

Brand personality is defined by Aaker 2012 as a unique set of associations that brand managers aim to establish and maintain. It is based on "soft" intangible associations and covers the emotional side of the brand image (Biel 1999). Brand image is defined as the set of all associations linked, in the consumer's memory, to a brand (Aaker 2009). Additionally, brand personality serves as a crucial element of brand identity, reflecting a company's intended meaning for its target audience. Kapferer (2012) defines brand identity as the brand's intended message conveyed by the firm to its target groups (Kapferer 2012). Conversely, brand image represents consumers' interpretation of the brand's identity, highlighting the dual aspect of brand personality (Geuens et al. 2009; Paschen et al. 2017; Plummer 2003). This dual aspect encompasses how the brand presents itself in its surroundings (brand identity—sender's perspective) and how it is socially perceived (brand image—recipient's perspective). Scholars argue that brand personality is best comprehended

from the sender's viewpoint, the intrinsic perspective "what the brand says about itself," whereas brand image is best understood from the receiver's viewpoint the extrinsic perspective "what consumers say and think about the brand" (Geuens et al. 2009; Konecnik Ruzzier 2013).

Building on the intrinsic perspective, Aaker (1997) developed the Brand Personality Scale (BPS) (Aaker 1997), which became a widely adopted instrument for evaluating the personality of product brands and has been a focal point in numerous studies, including tourism destinations (Ekinci & Hosany 2006). Aaker (1997) defines brand personality as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand." This concept significantly impacts brand evaluation, brand preference, brand trust, brand affect, and brand loyalty (Sung et al. 2010). However, recent research has raised doubts about the applicability and generalizability of Aaker's brand personality framework (Austin et al. 2003), as its focus on positive human psychology may lead to the omission of negative traits present in both individuals and brands (Kaplan et al. 2010). Ekinci and Hosany (2006) describe destination personality as the human traits associated with a place from the perspective of a tourist, using Aaker's paradigm. Similar to individuals and brands, places also benefit from developing consistent personality traits over time.

While there is research on place brand identity, it primarily focuses on tourism destinations (Ekinci & Hosany 2006; Henderson 2000; Hosany et al. 2006). Studies on the application of Aaker's BPS to tourism appear to be controversial due to a lack of consensus on how the scale should be applied and what items should be included in different contexts. The place marketing literature agrees with previous studies on the multidimensionality of the destination personality construct, but there is no real consensus on the number, nature, and content of its dimensions (Ekinci & Hosany 2006). Murhpy (2016) emphasizes the need to enhance the BPS measurement, which involves the creation of a customized set of brand personality items, subjected to testing across various samples and destinations. Taking into account the mentioned points, this study opts for the brand archetype model, which is best suited for capturing the personality of a place and its perceived image in the collective narrative, as seen by the locals (Murhpy 2016).

### Insights into brand identity and brand image

A place brand comes to life through a branding process to shape and manage the place's image. This branding process is the initial step in transforming a place's identity into a desirable consumer perception. While different individuals may hold varied associations with the same place, certain associations can become so widely accepted and shared that they form stereotypical images for specific



places; they become the place’s image. Those “shared” consumer perceptions make up the brand image (Boisen et al. 2011).

Brand image is influenced by brand association and consumer perception, rooted in experiences, emotions, attitudes, and behavior (Keller 1993; 2003). Elements such as brand personality, brand name, brand physics, brand visuals, brand slogan, and brand heritage enhance the brand identity, providing a comprehensive perspective to grasp the essence of a brand (Aaker 2009, 2012; Kapferer 2012; Keller 1993, 2003; Azoulay & Kapferer 2003; and Risitano 2006). According to Aaker (2012), the brand narrative plays a crucial role in brand elements, emphasizing the significance of storytelling in shaping brand identity, fostering consumer connection, and setting brands apart from competitors.

Brand identity is best understood from the sender’s perspective, such as city officials, urban planners, property owners, and developers, while the brand image is perceived from the receiver’s perspective, including locals, visitors, residents, and tourists, representing consumers’ interpretation of the brand’s identity. Strategies are employed by senders to communicate the brand’s identity and value to receivers, the stakeholders.

In Risitano’s (2006) Destination Branding Model, the essential phases of destination branding involve defining and communicating the primary brand value. The first step is establishing the destination brand identity, which includes elements like brand culture, character, personality, name, logos, and slogans. This cohesive identity forms the foundation for a consistent and compelling brand message. The next crucial step involves analyzing and measuring perceptions of the brand, referred to as brand knowledge. This

encompasses brand awareness and brand image, which are critical for positioning the destination in people’s minds.

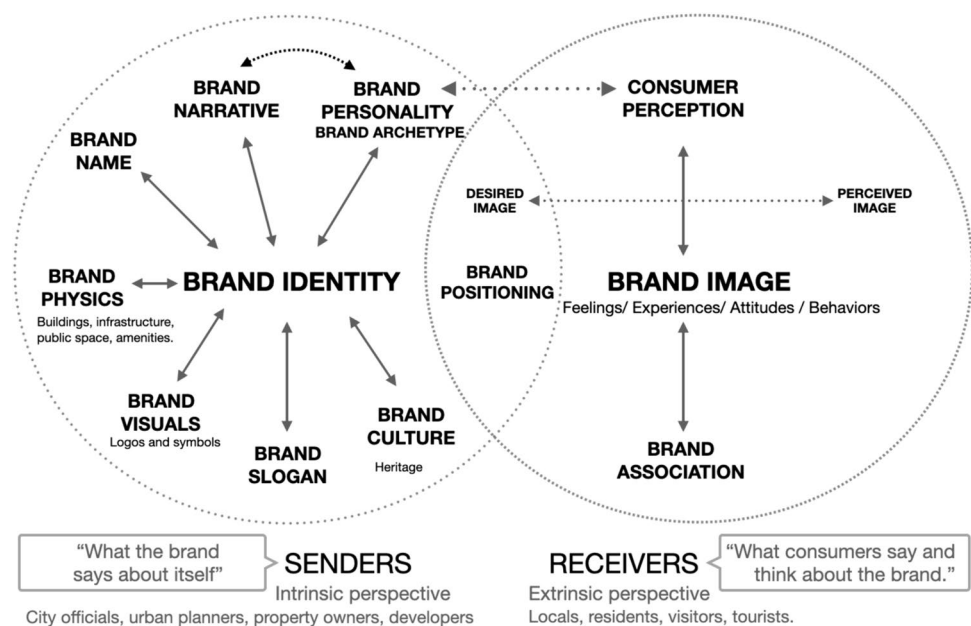
In some cases, a place may have a perceived brand image that does not align with the desired brand identity, resulting in a discrepancy between what the brand conveys and what consumers perceive and believe.

To gain a comprehensive insight into the relationship between brand identity and brand image, we draw inspiration from Ashworth’s (2008) place brand management and branding process model, Keller’s (2003) concept of the multidimensional nature of consumer brand knowledge, and Risitano’s (2006) Destination Branding Model. Our focus lies in examining both brand identity and brand image, and their relation to brand personality and brand narrative, as depicted in Fig. 1.

As outlined by Ashworth (2008), the principles of product branding encompass three key components that are applicable to places: brand identity, brand positioning, and brand image. Figure 1 depicts these elements in a model to demonstrate the interconnections between brand identity and brand image, whose alignment is crucial for establishing brand positioning. Managing a place brand entails ongoing development of brand identity, strategic positioning, and measurement and monitoring of brand image, including necessary measures to improve it if required (Boisen et al. 2011).

Brand personality/archetype and brand narrative, and their relation to brand image, play a pivotal role in connecting and shaping the community’s consumer perception about a place. People’s experiences, memories, and stories within the place shape the narrative, affecting the perceived brand personality, and subsequently, the brand image.

**Fig. 1** Brand identity/brand image. *Source* Redeveloped by the authors based on Risitano’s (2006), Ashworth’s (2008), and Keller’s (2003)





## Navigating brand archetypes

An archetype is a mental representation of a common, generic character in a story that can evoke emotional resonance in an observer (Jung 1968; Jung & Storr 1983). Carl Jung expanded on Freud's concept by introducing the idea of the collective unconscious, where shared human experiences are stored. He proposed that universal archetypes, such as the self, the shadow, the anima/animus, and the persona, along with others like the hero, the caregiver, the sage, and the trickster, are innate in human nature, and are influenced by evolution. These archetypes are conveyed through the "collective unconscious" and are cultural aspects within each individual, serving as the psychological underpinning of human nature. People may have multiple archetypes, some core to their identity, others changing over time (Faber & Mayer 2009).

Some branding and marketing executives have turned to archetypes as an alternative to Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale (Ganassali & Matysiewicz 2020; Woodside 2010; Xara-brasil et al. 2018). Archetypes offer a way for marketers to understand the inherent meaning of product categories, allowing them to create enduring brand identities that can establish market leadership, convey meaningful messages, and foster customer loyalty. This involves crafting brand narratives that are immediately recognizable and relatable. Archetypes are utilized to interact with the innermost motivations of consumers and to give meaning to brands associated with their conscious and unconscious desires (Mark & Pearson 2001).

While previous research advocated for the use of a single archetype per brand, recent findings challenge this notion. Studies reveal that successful brands establish connections with consumers by consistently evoking specific archetypes. Significantly, the research suggests that strong brands now tend to incorporate multiple archetypes simultaneously (Wertime 2002; Xara-brasil et al. 2018).

Mark and Pearson (2001), drawing on Jungian psychology, were pioneers in applying archetypal concepts to brand management, identifying 12 distinct archetypes that brands might evoke to build their image (Table 1). However, the concept of brand archetypes has faced criticism in the two decades after Mark and Pearson's (2001) seminal work, particularly from those responsible for putting it into practice. Critics argue that it is outdated and ineffective in real-world brand management. Scholars such as Macinnis & Folkes (2016) have stressed the need for further research in this area, highlighting the scarcity of studies on the role of brand archetypes. They believe that additional research will provide crucial insights into how consumers perceive, engage with, and establish connections with firms in ways akin to human interactions.

## Brand personality vs brand archetype

Both frameworks, Brand Personality (Aaker 1997) and Brand Archetypes (Mark & Pearson 2001), have exerted significant influence in branding. However, definitively determining which framework is more widely used proves challenging, as their adoption can vary depending on the specific contexts and the preferences of branding professionals.

**Table 1** Baseline for archetypes definitions

Archetype	Definition	Human needs & desires
Belonging: pursue connection		
Everyman/orphan	The working-class common person; Relatable	Belonging
Jester	Fun, playful, and comedian; Prankster	Enjoyment
Lover	Intimate, romantic, sensual, passionate; Seductive	Intimacy
Stability & control: provide structure to the world		
Caregiver/universal mother	Caring, compassionate, and nurturing; Protective	Service/stability
Ruler/father	Power, dominant, and control; Leader, the boss	Control/stability
Creator	Creative, visionary, and independent; Innovator	Innovation/stability
Independence: explore spirituality: yearn for paradise		
Explorer	Free, adventurous. Independent	Freedom
Innocent	Pure, faithful, naive, childlike character; symbolizing renewal	Safety
Sage/wise old man	Wise. Enlightenment, knowledge, and understanding;	Understanding
Mastery & risk: pursuit of happiness		
Magician	Visionary, alchemist and mystical; Magical	Power
Outlaw	Wild, rebellious, and risk taker; Rule-breaker	Liberation
Hero/warrior	Courageous, warrior, motivator; Brave	Mastery

Source Mark and Pearson's (2001) archetypes, redesigned by the authors 2023



While Aaker's Brand Personality scale has garnered significant recognition and is frequently referenced in tourism branding and marketing textbooks, its structured approach facilitates the assessment and development of brand personality traits. Particularly in city branding, where the emphasis lies on defining and communicating the unique personality traits and values of a city, Aaker's framework may be more suitable. This systematic assessment and development of desired brand personality dimensions aid in shaping the city's positioning and messaging, making it easily understood and implemented by city branding practitioners.

In contrast, the Mark and Pearson's Brand Archetypes model focuses on the mythological and storytelling aspects of branding. It stresses the importance of using storytelling and symbolism to align brand identity with brand image. The model helps places identify powerful archetypal narratives that resonate with their identity. It advocates the use of storytelling techniques to evoke a sense of meaning and inspiration around the place brand. The growing interest in archetypes indicates a substantial shift in marketing professionals' approaches, as they seek more complex methods of attracting, retaining, and staying relevant within the brand community (Xara-brasil et al. 2018).

In place branding, success lies in a meticulously designed strategy that yields a clear, authentic, and consistent message. The crucial step is aligning brand identity with the brand image. Utilizing brand archetypes can offer a dependable framework for instilling universally comprehensible and meaningful concepts that connect with all stakeholders.

The objective of this research is to identify how the local community perceives the brand image of a specific place, with a focus on brand archetypes. Our main hypothesis states that the brand archetype framework is valid and can be identified through the locals narratives. This study specifically focuses on a culturally rich community.

## The case of Jabal Al Weibdeh: a neighborhood in Amman

To conceptualize a place within a framework of geographical areas is to understand it as part of a broader territorial structure. For example, within this framework, the Middle East encompasses countries like Jordan, which in turn encompasses cities like Amman, and further breaks down into neighborhoods within Amman. In the context of place branding, decision-makers often use place branding to strengthen geographical regions. The city, in this regard, comprises numerous places within its borders. Nevertheless, these places are selectively utilized to shape the city's image (Boisen et al. 2011).

In the case of a relatively new city such as Amman, its oldest neighborhoods play a significant role in shaping its

identity. These areas embody distinctive features that reflect the city's historical evolution, representing its collective history. Often, these places have gradually developed an identity that mirrors societal development over time. Such places serve as key identifiers of the city as a whole, setting it apart from others (Boisen et al. 2011).

Since its revival in the 1870s, Amman has served as a haven for different communities, initially showcasing coexistence among various groups and offering modern amenities and education. Urban growth extended from the valley to the hills after 1927, with wealthier residents migrating to Jabal Amman and Jabal Al Weibdeh. As Jordan's capital since 1922, Amman's essence has been shaped by diverse cultures of Palestinians, Circassians, Iraqis, and Armenians, earning its reputation as a welcoming refuge for people from diverse backgrounds, the city of many hats (Daher 2011).

In 2002, an Amman re-branding campaign shifted focus from emphasizing its ancient Greco-Roman heritage to adopting a more comprehensive identity. The new logo design aimed to represent the city holistically, capturing both its youthful energy and rich historical heritage (Khirfan & Momani 2013). In 2014, the Amman municipality introduced the "Our Mother Amman" city slogan as part of a campaign to revitalize the city and foster a sense of belonging and civic pride (Jordan Times 2017). Figure 2.

In recent years, there has been increased attention on Amman's first modernist urban environments, particularly Jabal Amman and Jabal Al Weibdeh (Khirfan & Momani 2013). These neighborhoods are viewed by locals as more emblematic of the city's identity compared to the modern areas, with Jabal Al Weibdeh particularly reminiscent of Amman's core identity. Al-Asad highlights Jabal Al Weibdeh as a vibrant and dynamic location, gradually emerging as Amman's cultural hub and one of the rare enclaves preserving the historical memory of Amman (Al-Asad 2004). This study examines changes in the brand archetype of Jabal Al Weibdeh, an extension of downtown Amman known for its rich cultural heritage and sense of community. It has recently evolved into a vibrant cultural and artistic hub, attracting locals and tourists alike. Demographic shifts have occurred in the area, with an increase in international residents leading to the exodus of local families in favor of educated young singles or couples without children (Abed 2020).

## Methodology

Residents embody the essence of the local culture and have grown in importance as a source of local identity and civic pride in their home city or community (Boisen et al. 2018). Despite studies demonstrating their value (Oguztimur & Akturan 2015), local citizens are frequently





**Fig. 2** Amman's current logo, previous logo, and campaign slogan ("Our mother Amman"). *Source*Jordan Times (2017)

underrepresented in the city branding process (Compte-Pujol et al. 2018). Zenker and Beckmann (2013) demonstrate that city perceptions of an external target group are far more stereotyped, but brand perceptions of an internal target group are more diversified. Consequently, the research targeted the diverse community of Jabal Al Weibdeh, including residents, workers, and local visitors, as the main stakeholders to derive the attributes and investigate the brand image, and the place branding of the neighborhood, and its relation to Amman as a whole. This mix, yet locally oriented, represents a variety of perspectives and experiences, reflecting the internal diversity of the community and providing a comprehensive understanding of the neighborhood's brand dynamics.

A mixed-methods approach was employed to collect and validate data, chosen for its ability to provide a holistic understanding of the neighborhood's brand image by combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research. The study utilized desktop research and secondary data alongside primary data gathered through in-depth interviews, online surveys, and observations. These methods were used to examine the historical anecdotes contributing to the brand archetype of Jabal Al Weibdeh and its relation to the overall brand identity and personality of Amman.

The quantitative analysis included an online survey conducted via Google Forms in July and August of 2023 to collect data on the brand archetype of Jabal Al Weibdeh, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Amman with a population of approximately 12,000 residents (Albaik 2023). The survey included Likert scale, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions designed to capture various dimensions of participants' perceptions. It targeted both local inhabitants and various types of visitors to the neighborhood.

A total of 204 participants, including residents of Jabal Al Weibdeh and other Amman locals living both within and outside the neighborhood, took part in the survey. This diverse group comprised residents, local visitors, workers, influencers, and bloggers who identified with the "Jabal Al Weibdeh community" and were interested in the neighborhood's cultural values. The survey aimed to capture a broad

perspective of the neighborhood's image, encompassing viewpoints from across the city of Amman.

This approach was adopted to engage with the various community types connected to Jabal Al Weibdeh, aiming to capture the crucial elements that contribute to the area's vibrancy and diversity. The goal was also to assess and validate people's narratives related to the perceived archetypes of the place, which were explored through in-depth interviews. A cross-sectional strategy was employed by using both qualitative and quantitative methods to support and validate each other. The survey questions were designed to help construct the perceived image of the place within the framework of the 12 brand archetypes. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the survey responses, providing an overview of the neighborhood's brand image and the attributes most commonly associated with it.

Qualitative research was conducted to ensure alignment between the locals' perceptions of their surroundings and the researched archetypes. Observations and mental mapping at the neighborhood level in Jabal Al Weibdeh were part of this qualitative approach, helping to interpret various social events and behaviors and complementing other methods used to investigate the neighborhood's brand image. Additionally, six in-depth interviews were conducted with community members from diverse backgrounds. These narratives revealed connections and offered unique perspectives, each reflecting a different archetype. By analyzing historical narratives through observations and interviews, the research provided a deeper understanding of the neighborhood's and the city's brand identities.

The research employed in-depth interviews, combining predefined open-ended questions with the flexibility to explore emerging topics. This approach ensured a thorough exploration of Jabal Al Weibdeh while maintaining focus on key areas. The primary questions addressed descriptions of the area, personal experiences, and envisioning the neighborhood as a person. Follow-up questions were adapted based on interviewee responses to gain deeper insights.

Interviewees were selected for their diverse relationships with Jabal Al Weibdeh, including a business owner from the





1980s, someone who grew up in the neighborhood during the 1970s, and long-term residents. Most interviews were conducted face-to-face, with one exception via telephone, and each lasted approximately thirty minutes.

## Data collection and analysis

Places, when viewed as brands, can effectively encapsulate the essence of their identity and convey messages in subtle ways. As a result, memories related to places often manifest as narratives that unveil embedded archetypes. Marketing research has thus focused on uncovering brand archetypal personalities using storytelling methods (Muniz et al. 2015). In order to unveil these archetypes, we investigated the linguistic expressions used by the city locals, which frequently emerge in the form of their own narratives. Interviews were conducted with individuals from diverse backgrounds and with various connections to Jabal Al Weibdeh. The interviewees especially individuals who had grown up in the area, operated businesses or were employed had the most interpretative line towards the personality of the neighborhood when perceiving it as a person. The conducted in-depth interviews aimed at gathering insights into personal memories, relationships, and life phases. Through these discussions, we aimed to identify the neighborhood's perceived image, shed light on changes in the urban context, and decipher the participants' reflections on its evolving archetype.

Analyzing the historical evolution of Amman's key neighborhood Jabal Al Weibdeh reveals that place names, like commercial brands, trigger perceptions and associations in the mind. The name of a location can be considered a brand, encompassing several geographical representations that collectively build the brand image associated with that specific location (Boisen et al. 2011). In the case of Jabal Al Weibdeh, its name has evolved over time to reflect different growth stages and societal associations, with preferences for naming varying among the city locals and social media groups. It was initially named 'Labeled' (mountain between

mountains), then 'Jasmine Mountain' due to the prevalence of jasmine shrubs in gardens. In the 1950s, it became known as 'the nationalists' mountain' because of its association with political activism. In the 1970s, the presence of embassies led to it being referred to as 'the Americans' quarter'. Originally and currently known as Al Weibdeh, after a common plant called Luweibdeh (Abed 2020). However, individuals with strong ties to the neighborhood often prefer to call it the "Jasmine Mountain," a name that enjoys widespread use in various social media groups.

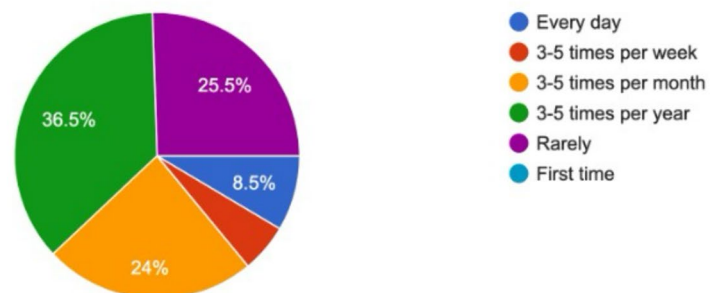
Such approaches have started to highlight the different personalities of Jabal Al Weibdeh in association to the overall identity of Amman. Codes identified from the interviews include "the mother of all," "the wise," "the authentic," and "the caregiver," among many others, as illustrated in Figure 4. Further selective coding was supported and validated by an online survey, which reached additional social groups and a more diverse set of residents across Amman. This process highlighted the main characteristics and identity of the neighborhood. Over 50% of the surveyed participants reported frequently visiting Jabal Al Weibdeh. However, in most cases, the visitors did not reside in the neighborhood, as shown in Fig. 3.

The survey has highlighted the need to have an authentic area where a distinct identity thrives, reflecting the sense of belonging within communities, even for those residing outside the neighborhood. Questions about the hypothetical gender and age of the neighborhood were included, recognizing that envisioning a person without demographic characteristics is challenging (Aaker 1997). Consistent with earlier qualitative findings, the online survey reveals that Jabal Al Weibdeh is perceived as an elderly woman over 60 years old, as illustrated in Table 2.

The research involved an enlightening interview with a former resident of Jabal Al Weibdeh, renowned for actively sharing narrative stories through social media posts. He has documented the family names that once inhabited the area and has written multiple articles aimed at capturing its history. His insights shed light on the neighborhood's

**Fig. 3** Survey on visitors to Jabal Al Weibdeh. *Source* Authors (2023)

**How often do you come to Jabal Al-Weibdeh:**  
200 responses



**Table 2** Personifying Jabal Al Weibdeh

If Jabal Al-Weibdeh was a person,  
how old would that person be?

Age Range	Percentage
< 21	1%
21 - 30	6%
31 - 40	10%
41 - 50	12%
51 - 60	15%
> 60	49%
> 100	7%

Source Authors (2023)

tight-knit community, where familiarity extended to personal recognition by name. He painted vivid pictures of romantic encounters in the local park and the captivating atmosphere of narrow alleyways that facilitated romantic connections. Over time, the neighborhood underwent a transformation, shifting from a family centered environment to a bustling commercial hub. Notably, his observations highlighted a shift in the archetype associated with the neighborhood, transitioning from a lover/caregiver archetype to a creator/sage archetype, which he attributed to the effects of urban transformation.

Another interviewee, a business owner, who has lived in the area since the 1970s, described the emergence of an underground cultural movement within metropolitan centers. He believes that the neighborhood preserves its creative core, as evidenced by the thriving art and cultural activities. His view of the place embodies the creator archetype.

An interesting perspective came from an old resident of the area. To her, Jabal Al Weibdeh seems like it is trying to mimic a cultured outlaw. "It's almost as if it's being taken over by an imposter, forcefully imposing a new identity upon it." Those who visit are seeking to connect with a particular lifestyle—one characterized by a cultured open-minded community. The neighborhood of her youth, on the other hand, was secluded, peaceful, and serene. It is currently striving to embody the sage/rebel archetype.

Other interview partners have shared the view of transforming Jabal Al Weibdeh from a close-knit community to a commercial hub. They noticed the neighborhood's enduring creative spirit and felt it balanced its calm past with a newly established identity. They noted the neighborhood's departure from the lover archetype, as evidenced by small walkways, staircases, jasmine plants, and lovely ancient houses. These shared memories of love leave an impact that is profoundly based on our yearning for connection.

If Jabal Al-Weibdeh was a  
person, would that person be a?

Gender	Percentage
Man	38%
Woman	62%

Similarly, such views and expressions of the identity and transformation of Jabal Al Weibdeh were also reflected in the online survey. Various reasons were identified as causing and triggering interest in the place for visitors and workers. However, predominantly, the older setting and its architectural layout and building typologies were considered as a heritage asset and value for the neighborhood. These were the most commonly cited reasons for utilizing the space and becoming associated with the neighborhood. Jabal Al Weibdeh, being one of the oldest neighborhoods in the capital Amman, is known for its beautiful houses from the 1940s and 1950s, which were once home to rich and influential residents. These classic, traditional, and old elements contribute significantly to the neighborhood's unique character and appeal, as shown in Table 3.

Recognition and identification of the neighborhood have taken this research a step further. In addition to providing visitors with a sense of identity and belonging, Jabal Al Weibdeh contributes significantly to the overall representation of Amman's image. As Amman has developed extensively over the decades, issues related to identity have been neglected. The loss of traditional and composite integrity, the increased building density, the insufficient area of open spaces, and other key issues related to the city's character have been overlooked in the modernization process (Melnik 2019). Jabal Al Weibdeh, with its classic and traditional elements, embodies the essence of old Amman, as indicated by many people in their interviews and surveys. It is represented by the presence of main destinations within its area, such as foreign embassies and organizations, old falafel shops, affordable housing, old schools of Amman, and a great place to hang out and meet friends. It also embodies a sense of character and relief, representing a place to live and a neighborly environment that is characteristic of Amman, as shown in Table 4.



**Table 3** Investigated personality of Jabal Al Weibdeh. *Source* Authors 2023

How would you describe the "personality" of Jabal Al Weibdeh?		
Personality trait	Responses	Percentage
Heritage, old, classic, traditional, wise—SAGE	105	53.0
Down to earth, easy going, low key, friendly—EVERYMAN	55	27.8
Sensual, beautiful, intimate, passionate—LOVER	53	26.8
Creative, smart—CREATOR	44	22.2
Safe, welcoming, sweet, sincere—INNOCENT	36	18.2
Freedom, adventurous, outgoing- EXPLORER	33	16.7
Caring, generous, helpful, giving- CAREGIVER	28	14.1
Bustling, energetic, fun, cheerful—JESTER	19	9.6
Powerful, imaginative, enchanting, mystical—MAGICIAN	17	8.6
Rebellious, liberal—OUTLAW	15	7.6
Steady, proud, patriotic, authoritative, in-control—RULER	10	5.1
Brave, mastery—HERO	4	2

**Table 4** Investigated perceptions and experiences of Jabal Al Weibdeh. *Source* Authors 2023

How would you describe your favorite experiences in Jabal Al Weibdeh?		
Description	Responses	Percentage
Cultural heritage, small neighborhood charm	143	71.90
Neighborly, friendly, down to earth	87	43.70
Casual, laid-back, quiet, peaceful	56	28.10
Affordable, family friendly living	43	21.60
Natural, beautiful surroundings	40	20.10
Energetic, fun, entertaining, artistic	32	16.10
Evolving, positive momentum	32	16.10
Clean, well kept, safe	23	11.60
Convenient location	12	6.00
Always lost in getting around	1	0.50
Education	1	0.50
Old buildings and new restaurants	1	0.50

The survey results in Table 4, which highlight people's favorite experiences in Jabal Al Weibdeh, underscore the neighborhood's positive contribution to the overall image of Amman. According to the survey, the most favored aspects of Jabal Al Weibdeh include its cultural heritage and small neighborhood charm, its neighborly and friendly atmosphere, and its casual, laid-back, quiet, and peaceful environment. These attributes, along with the historic architecture and vibrant community life, exemplify a Selective Endorsed Brand that resonates with both locals and visitors. This positive perception of the neighborhood contributes to a more favorable overall image of Amman, suggesting that similar neighborhoods could also be leveraged to enhance the city's brand. By recognizing and promoting the unique attributes of neighborhoods like Jabal Al Weibdeh, Amman can build

a more cohesive and appealing city image that reflects its diverse and rich heritage (Table 5).

## Towards capturing the image of Jabal Al Weibdeh

An open question asked respondents to list three descriptive words that they felt were appropriate for characterizing the place, framed as "If Jabal Al Weibdeh was a person, how would you describe that person?" The collected adjectives were then transformed into a word cloud using a Word Cloud generator. The most frequently used adjective was "Wise," followed by "Old," "Authentic," and "Friendly". The open-ended question allowed for a wide range of descriptors beyond the suggested list, as in Fig. 4.

Participants were presented with a multiple-choice question containing 12 archetypes, each accompanied by a brief description. They were asked to choose up to three archetypes that they believed best characterized the "personality" of Jabal Al Weibdeh. These archetypes were presented in a checklist format, complete with detailed descriptions and translated into the participants' local language (Arabic). While the survey was conducted in English, the 12 archetypes were translated into the locals native language to ensure participants understood each archetype. Participants were then asked to indicate which archetype best aligned with Jabal Al Weibdeh's personality. As shown in Fig. 5, they were provided with a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (Strong match) to 5 (Poor match).

What archetype would match Jabal Al Weibdeh if it was a person?

- The characteristic is not matching to Jabal Al Weibdeh at all 5.

- The characteristic is a very good match to Jabal Al Weibdeh – 1.





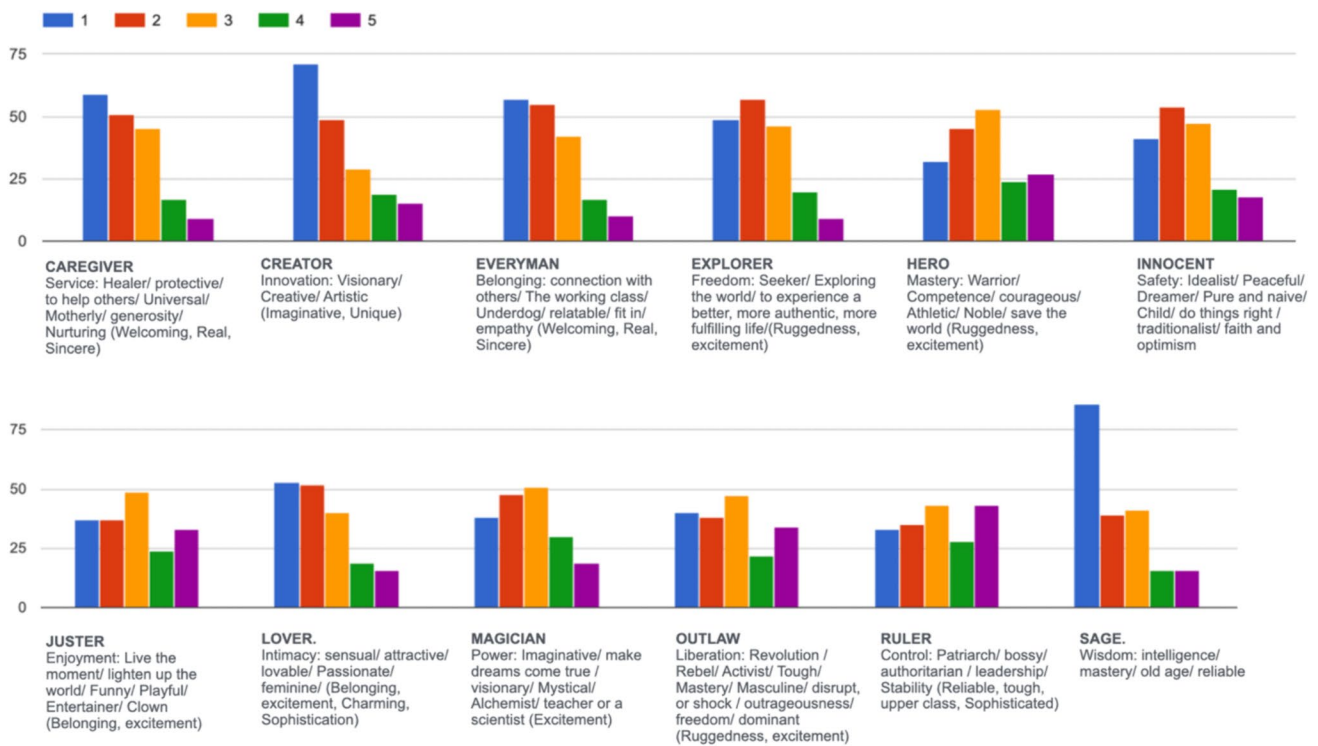


Fig. 5 Investigated archetypes matching Jabal Al Weibdeh. Source: Authors (2023)

it embodies a quest for knowledge and employs intelligence to interpret the world, as described by Mark and Pearson (2001). It symbolizes a universal message of experience, guidance, and heritage as pointed out by Wertime (2002). Similarly, in line with Mark and Pearson (2001), the creator archetype can be seen as an artist or entrepreneur capable of exploring the human imagination and inspiring others. This connection could be linked to the presence of galleries and artistic hubs frequented by intellectuals in the area.

### Limitations of research

The scope of this study is limited to a single neighborhood. Future research could adopt a similar methodology to investigate various neighborhoods in diverse geographical settings. We adopted a structured approach to identify the brand archetypes of the neighborhood by analyzing the stories and narratives of residents, former residents, and local visitors living in Amman. This study primarily investigated the perspectives of local stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of synthesizing this identity from diverse stakeholders in Amman rather than relying on touristic perceptions. Future research could extend its scope by employing quantitative approaches and conducting surveys with well-defined samples, thereby yielding broader insights from tourists and expatriates. Researchers aim to lay the groundwork for a

future study intended to compare various neighborhoods brand archetypes with the overarching city brand archetype of Amman.

### Conclusion

This research aimed to explore human traits in places through Carl Jung’s concept of brand archetypes, focusing on Amman and its neighborhood, Jabal Al Weibdeh. By examining the city as the main brand and the neighborhood as a sub-brand, the study challenges the traditional single umbrella city brand approach, advocating instead for a Selective Endorsed brand architecture strategy that embraces the city’s diversity. This approach allows for a customized strategy to place branding, highlighting the dynamic nature of places shaped by historical evolution, cultural heritage, and societal interactions.

Using mixed research methods, including interviews and surveys, the study identified distinct brand archetypes within Jabal Al Weibdeh, revealing its unique characteristics and narratives. The findings show that the neighborhood is perceived positively by both residents and local visitors, with cultural heritage, small neighborhood charm, and historic ambiance being the most favored aspects. These attributes align with the "Sage" and "Creator" archetypes, indicating a neighborhood rich in knowledge, culture, and creativity.





The research emphasizes the correlation between community narratives and their emotional attachment to the place, underscoring the need for a customized approach to city branding that recognizes and highlights key neighborhoods' unique attributes. By promoting the distinct characteristics of neighborhoods like Jabal Al Weibdeh, Amman can build a more cohesive and appealing city image that reflects its diverse heritage.

Local authorities must focus on developing a distinct place brand identity that aligns with its image, fostering a collective identity for cities and their neighborhoods. Municipal authorities and further research should conduct qualitative investigations to capture new brand identities for specific neighborhoods, especially when significant urban transformation has changed their character. This approach can enhance the overall brand equity of cities.

The findings from this study can inform strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing Jabal Al Weibdeh's brand identity and fostering deeper connections with stakeholders. By leveraging its rich heritage, cultural vibrancy, and community spirit, Jabal Al Weibdeh has the potential to emerge as a compelling destination that resonates with residents and local visitors alike. Through continued collaboration and dialogue, stakeholders can align brand identity with brand image, thereby strengthening Jabal Al Weibdeh's position as a key contributor to the overall image of Amman.

Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of place branding by highlighting the relevance of brand archetypes and advocating for a Selective Endorsed brand architecture strategy. This approach not only strengthens the identity of individual neighborhoods but also elevates the collective image of Amman, creating a more attractive destination.

## Declarations

**Conflict of interest** The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper. Any financial or personal relationships with individuals or organizations that could inappropriately influence, or be perceived to influence, their work are disclosed.

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