PLACE BRANDING: strategic actions for the promotion of a commercial space in Florianópolis

PLACE BRANDING: ações estratégicas para a promoção de um espaço comercial de Florianópolis

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ABSTRACT

In order to singularize and obtain commercial space, it is necessary to employ strategies to create an identity that represents one's brand. The objective of this research is to identify the strategic actions of place branding used in the promotion of the commercial space of Vidal Ramos Street, in the city of Florianópolis. A basic, qualitative and descriptive research was applied, carried out within the limits of the case study. The results indicated that Vidal Ramos Street, after its revitalization, became an important territorial place branding space, since it reaches different audiences in its territory, being an important brand for the historical center of the city of Florianópolis.

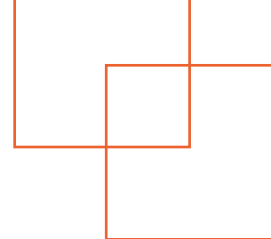## KEYWORDS

Place Branding. Promotion. Identity.

RESUMO

Buscando-se diferenciar e ganhar um espaço comercial, estratégias para criar uma identidade que represente a sua marca são necessárias. O objetivo desta pesquisa é identificar as ações estratégicas do place branding usadas na promoção do espaço comercial da Rua Vidal Ramos, na cidade de Florianópolis. Aplicou-se uma pesquisa básica, qualitativa e descritiva, realizada nos limites de estudo de caso. Os resultados indicaram que a Rua Vidal Ramos, após a sua revitalização, transformou-se em um importante espaço de place branding territorial, visto que atinge distintos públicos em seu território, sendo uma marca importante para o centro histórico da cidade de Florianópolis.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Place Branding. Promoção. Identidade.

1 INTRODUCTION

Place branding can be present in the promotion of territorial spaces of countries, regions, cities and small local communities. To present the theme, the concept of Gaio and Gouveia (2013) was adopted, which defines place branding as the process of projecting, for a place, symbols and images that represent the set of central, lasting and distinctive characteristics that the actors have given to this place, thus creating a focus of identity. Therefore, its strategic actions, when applied in commercial territories, create their own local identity, which attracts consumers, bringing competitive advantages and offering value to competing commercial spaces. Thus, these spaces are now managed as brands that must compete for the attention of different audiences, meeting their desires and needs, both in terms of physical, organizational, aesthetic and, especially, emotional aspects, which direct the choice of commercial space, as well as purchasing decisions. In this sense, place branding promotes the identity of the place, with a new approach of innovative space management to influence its image as an attractive place to visit, work, and do business, among others.

This article aims to identify the strategic actions of place branding used in the promotion of the commercial space of Vidal Ramos Street, in the historical center of the city of Florianópolis. Also, it aims to disclose the relevance of the creation of the territorial brand as a strategic posture focused on the promotion of products and services, positively influencing the image of the territory, so that it can consolidate and strengthen the emotional connection between the city and the public that seeks to provide services and make their purchases on site.

The justification for the choice of the theme comes from the need to develop knowledge about place branding concepts, both at theoretical and practical levels. In this context, it is necessary to know the image of the territorial brand of Vidal Ramos Street perceived by the resident public of the city of Florianópolis. It is important to highlight that, in the contemporary space, the ease of mobility between countries and regions is increasingly important for the city that is the focus of this research, intensified by urban development policies that use place branding in the creation of the territorial brand. The aim is to understand how this initiative enables local growth, brings economic benefits to the city and increases tourism and quality of life for residents.

The methodological design of the article took on the basic, qualitative and descriptive research typology, within the limits of a case study, with
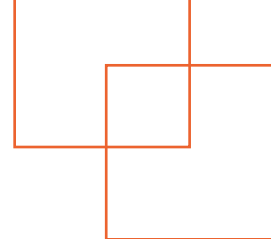
the application of interviews carried out with the Câmara de Lojistas da Rua Vidal Ramos, businesspeople and clientele of the local commerce. The theoretical grounding addresses: territory and identity; place branding strategies for territorial promotion; and territorial brand image as a purchase attraction.
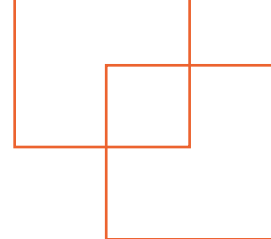
2 TERRITORY AND IDENTITY

In a practical approach, a territory is defined as a certain space that is built up over time. In the process of building the territory, individuals take the role of occupying the spaces in it. Stümer and Da Costa (2017, p. 52) define the following characteristics common to territories: "to possess area, resources, people, power, boundaries and borders". Thus, it can be understood that relationships involving social, ecological, economic and cultural aspects are part of the construction of the values of a territory. In the interaction with urban space, social dynamism can provide meanings, often changeable, because each individual perceives and lives experiences differently (BRODHAG, 2000).

Understanding the relationships between territories, as well as the activities that take place , contributes to the understanding of territoriality, which according to Saquet (2003, p. 79, our translation):

> [...] corresponds to the social relations and daily activities that men have with their surroundings. It is the result of the production process of each territory, being fundamental for the construction of identity and the reorganization of daily life. Thus, identity is constructed by the multiple relationships-territorialities that are established every day and this necessarily involves the material and immaterial works produced, such as temples, songs, beliefs, rituals, values, houses, streets, and other aspects.

The construction of territorial identity encompasses different elements, territorial realities, symbolic references, meanings, as well as social, political and economic experiences (DERROSSO; CURY, 2019). The identity of a certain place is made possible from what people experience and define as identification with the space. In this context, the differentiation of space and place contributes to the formation of territorial identity.

According to Esteves (2016, p. 19, our translation), "[...] places are spaces with meaning attributed by man, so places exist only when people exist". These relations between people and places determine the identity of the territory and, in this process, the characteristics that define what the place represents for a given group are defined. According to Stürmer
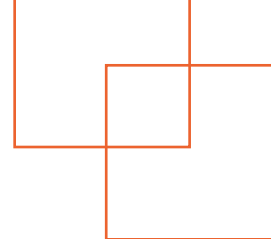
and Da Costa (2017, p. 54, our translation) "The territory understood as a process made from the inside out [...]". Thus the identity elements of a heritage can be divided in two. The tangible or material heritage is linked to the monuments, streets, houses and other physical works that make up the urban organization of the place. The intangible heritage, on the other hand, corresponds to elements of values such as beliefs, local cultural aspects and values linked to the place (CURY; DERROSSO, 2019).

By sharing experiences and experiences among the other members of the communities, individuals are inserted in the process of identity construction. In this context, they generally follow the concepts of hierarchy. This hierarchy can be developed in a relational way, as a principle of identity. Therefore, and according to Vieira (2016, p. 87, our translation), "[...] the identity of a person or a social group is constructed from something that is necessarily perceived as external, in short, the other".

In the same way that brand identity is related to the identity of subjects, the identity of a place acts as a consequence of the identity of individuals who are inserted in the territory. Thus, there are two fundamental elements for its comprehension: the subject belonging to the territory 'insider'; and the 'outsider' who is the one outside (visitor). In a systemic approach, Esteves (2016) points out that place branding promotes the approximation of the two subjects (insiders and outsiders), having as consequence the strengthening of local identity, so that the distance between perceptions can be diminished, creating a positive experience for both.

For Krucken (2009), the concept of belonging represents the pride that groups of residents acquire for their territory. The appreciation of historical elements - those that are linked to the history of the place - as well as the protection of material and immaterial heritage, contribute to the ability of successors to enjoy the heritage for the use of the territory. "Developing a clear and cohesive image of the territory also promotes interest in investing in commercial and industrial activities located there" (KRUCKEN, 2009, p. 102, our translation).

The positive projection of the territory directly impacts its development. Valuing the territory, the actors, the social, historical and cultural context becomes one of the strategies to create the image of a certain place, regardless of the micro (street) or macro (country) scale. For Krucken (2009), design has a fundamental role in creating the positive image of the territory, since through its methodologies of innovation and creation, it is possible to add value to products and services that aim to recognize and value the local identity, positio-

ning itself competitively in relation to those who do not work around these values.

In view of the discussed above, it was possible to understand that the relationship between territory, people, its history, culture, values, beliefs and economic activities, that is, all the experiences that people experience in community, build the image of their territory. However, to attract other people outside the community, it is necessary to promote its image. Thus, and aiming at understanding the relation of previously mentioned experiences and the territory, the following place branding tools are necessary for territorial promotion.

3 PLACE BRANDING STRATEGIES FOR TERRITORIAL PROMOTION

Based on the idea that design has strategic tools to achieve objectives, over the years the concept of branding has assumed a relevant role in society. Brands have an identity and, in turn, individuals have their own. Therefore, the communication of the brand with the consumer starts to establish another type of relationship that is not configured only in selling the product. Esteves (2016, p. 17, our translation) says that "Branding creates the alignment between these identities, defines how the message is sent and bets high on how it will be decoded and understood by the receiver".

Places, on the other hand, are likely to become part of brands. In the process of building the brand of a place, several aspects must be considered. Among these aspects, the main element can be the individual, as the perception of the subjective results from the gaze of each person towards the territory. Placemaking, which can be understood as 'making places', is a tool that inspires people so that they can, collectively, imagine and reestablish places, as well as corroborate the relationship between people and places (ESTEVES, 2016).

Understanding this process of reinventing the urban sphere as a tool, placemaking aims to "[...] make public spaces more attractive, qualifying them to become vibrant, alive, and with more use" (ESTEVES, 2016, p. 110, our translation). Concerning the qualifying of places, Pereira (2016, p. 123, our translation) states that "Looking for new elements is also part of placemaking to vitalize an area" and suggests as an example "[...] the creation of a fashion district where there is a series of clothing shops", where people can walk around, use the place as an outdoors mall, so
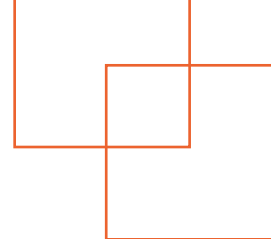
that everyone who enjoys the space benefits, from the merchants - with the flow of people - to the workers themselves, who pass by every day.

Planning to transform spaces into meaningful social places can come from different perspectives. Corrêa (2016, p. 117, our translation) exemplifies that "[...] a region may have an excess of one type of place and absence of others for which it has demand". In this sense, places are understood as subjects, since they have qualities and imperfections that make up their personality. The perception of this personality takes place when people share, among lifestyles, the physical space. In Pereira's vision (2016):

> Most of us experience these qualities without imagining that this has been planned, implemented, perpetuated and updated over the years. It is true that this is a process that occurs naturally, the fruit of a historical, geographical or socio-cultural context. However, it can also be induced through place branding practices (PEREIRA, 2016, p. 122, our translation).

Place branding, in Allan's view (2016), is a precursor of placemaking, as it first assesses the interaction of people with places, as well as the dynamics of the place, identifying possible experiences, positive performance and points that need to be improved. That is, by using the conclusions to project the improvements and expansion of the experiences offered in order to "[...] make the place more attractive as a place to live, work and learn and as a place to visit" (ALLAN, 2016, p. 168, our translation), one can consider that place branding has tools that should be used.

Several disciplines orbit place branding, since its function is not to create the image of a place, but rather a dialogue between different stakeholders working collaboratively. The multidisciplinary nature allows for different strategies linked to its principles to be applied in order to achieve the expected results. The management of a place-brand anticipates the understanding of its particularities in different spheres. The strengthening of the place depends on a broad understanding of the functional aspects (tangible) and values (intangible) of the place, as these aspects are responsible for the positive and negative evaluations of the place. Esteves (2016, p. 197, our translation) explains that "The experiences engage the population, it is the perception of this population that reinforces the reputation, that is, this population should become the main defender of 'their' place-brand".

The following stand out as the main strategies of place branding for territorial promotion:

a) to have a planning with clear objectives and goals, which evaluates the interaction of people with the place where they live,
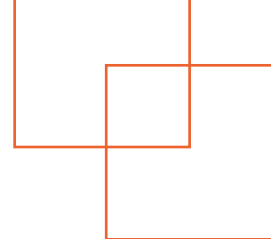
knowing their experiences and what they expect as improvements;

b) have as main element the perception of people about their own territory;

c) understand the importance of the positive effect, the communication of the local brand image for the attraction of residents and visitors;

d) apply well executed and lasting marketing campaigns, seeking the confidence of the market, focusing on tangible and intangible values;

e) making public spaces more attractive with meaning, seeking to attract the general public;

f) to organize commerce and other services such as a shopping mall, but outdoors.
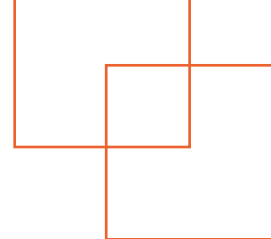
Therefore, the brand image has an influence on the attractiveness of the destination as a place for leisure and shopping.

4 TERRITORIAL BRAND IMAGE AS A PURCHASE ATTRACTION

The intense competition of product and service markets can result in territories in necessity of taking strategic actions to gain greater visibility for economic purposes. Thus, place branding emerges as an effective tool for the communication of the brand of a location in the symbolic field, linked to the productive and economic field. Reyes (2007) highlights that places need to present a clear identity to differentiate and attract new visitors, residents, tourists, etc. Place branding emerges as an important tool to assist in the development of strategies appropriate to each territory.

Also according to Reyes (2007), each place has the need to compete with other places so that the visibility and space in the world of consumers, tourists, businesses or investments are guaranteed. Kapferer (2005) argues that it is from a strong brand with a clear identity that it is possible to create mental structures, allowing the consumer to make more informed decisions when assessing the attributes offered by different places.

Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2006) point out that promoting a strong brand image of a city can contribute significantly to transforming the city into a multifaceted and desired brand. Therefore, the territorial brand image is one of the most important and influential tools of branding, re-

presenting the impressions that people make of the place. Reyes (2007) argues that in the area of territorial branding places are increasingly seen as products, when takin into consideration the use of brand management techniques.

In this context, to become competitive, territories must be managed through a strategy with emphasis on brand image. Buhalis (2000) believes that the most important criterion for choosing a destination is its image, stating that the consumer's level of satisfaction will depend on the evaluation of the experience lived in comparison with the expectations and anticipated perceptions in relation to the destination, that is, the image he or she has of the place.

Being the evaluation of the lived experience positive, there is a generation of satisfaction, which contributes to people's intention to return to the destination or recommend it to others. If it happens the other way around, it generates dissatisfaction, which can lead to negative comments and the intention of not returning (MATOS et al., 2012). This way the territorial brand image is transmitted to the market and will influence the consumer's choice. The consumer's purchasing behavior will be more easily predicted if the image of destiny is perceived and understood.

However, Gaio and Gouveia (2013) indicate that aspects such as authenticity, history, environment and culture are integrated in the identity of the place and that it correlates with the product offer aimed at tourism, trade, population settlement or investment. The authors add that, to this same identity, the projected image is associated (stimulated by the communication and meanings created by the transmitted narratives and the visual) and vice-versa.

In this regard, brand communication takes on the function of transforming brand identity into brand image. Thus, the brand only exists because it is communicated. However, communication is also an integral part of brand identity itself (FIGUEIRA, 2014). The author complements that communication is also a constituent of the brand, as through communication it is structured, it is shaped and it behaves, that is, it acquires meaning and legitimacy and thus becomes tangible and relevant to people.

Therefore, the symbolic image of the territory is linked to the historical, cultural, productive and economic field. With the power of communication, it aims to influence the behavior of its target audiences, seeking also to maintain the loyalty of customers and thus remain ahead of competing territories. In this context, the image of a place is a determining factor that influences the way people accept the place, which also directs business development. These issues are part of the strategic actions of
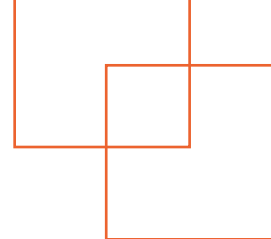
place branding, a case study presented in the following sections.

5 CASE STUDY - RUA VIDAL RAMOS, HISTORICAL CENTER OF FLORIANÓPOLIS

The city of Florianópolis is the capital of the State of Santa Catarina, a state located in the South Region of Brazil. It is composed of small islands, and in the island of Florianópolis tourism is recognized as an important source of revenue.
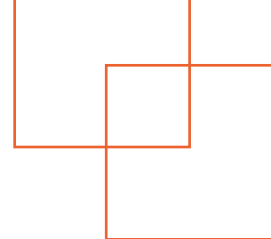
Vidal Ramos Street is located in the historical center of Florianópolis, between Arcipreste Paiva and Álvaro de Carvalho streets. Popularly known as 'outdoor shopping',

> [...] it is a strategic link between Centro and the Baía Norte. It is also an important commercial hub, concentrating about 70 stores in a 750 meter long road. During the period of planning and implementation of the rebuilding, there were 56 stores, 80% of which participated in the requalification project (REQUALIFICATION..., 2014, p. 3).

Vidal Ramos was revitalized in 2012, after a public-private partnership between the street traders, Prefeitura de Florianópolis, Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas (SEBRAE-SC), Associação Comercial e Industrial de Florianópolis (Acif) and Instituto de Planejamento Urbano de Florianópolis (Acif). This revitalization emerged mainly in an attempt to attract those buyers who were going to shopping malls instead of the street market.

The revitalization was developed with the implementation street furniture, road paving, expansion of sidewalks, grounding of power cables and renovation of store exteriors as concerns. The project went through 5 phases: bidding for the project (2008); project development (assembly in July 2008, presenting the project to the store tenants); start of construction (2010); inauguration (March 2012); and internal organization of the stores and training of professionals (REQUALIFICATION..., 2014).

As for the research methodology, qualitative research was applied in relation to the problem and descriptive research in relation to the objective. For the data collection, performed in the field research, a script was organized with questions that guided the semi-structured interviews, taking into consideration that other questions were addressed during the process. All the interviews were recorded. The sample was selected after the first contact with Câmara de Lojistas da Rua Vidal Ramos. The criteria for the selection of the sample were: product mix; older and

more recent commercial spaces and entrepreneurs who participated in the creation of the site.

First stage of the field research: contact with the president of the tenants' association. Second stage: organization of the semi-structured interview script, with open questions. Third stage: selection of the sample. Fourth stage: conducting the interviews (all recorded) following the script. During the process, several different situations occurred, with different statements, according to the receptivity of the interviewee. Fifth stage: transcription of the interviews; Sixth stage: qualitative analysis of the data. Seventh stage: description of the results.

The following is an analysis of the results of the qualitative research that took place with shopkeepers, entrepreneurs and frequenters of Vidal Ramos Street.

5.1 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The interviews were conducted during two days of different weeks of September and October 2019, all of them in person and on Vidal Ramos Street itself. The following table demonstrates, in an anonymous way, the identification, gender, age and connection of the interviewees with Vidal Ramos.

Table 1: Profile of interviewees

Identification	Gender	Age	Connection to Vidal Ramos
E1	Female	29	Store owner
E2	Female	54	Store owner
E3	Male	26	Store manager
E4	Female	24	Customer
E5	Male	20	Customer
E6	Male	38	Customer
E7	Female	35	Store owner

Source: authors (2019).

The first part of the interview consisted of an analysis of the profile of the interviewees and their connection with Vidal Ramos. Thus, questions were asked about the year they began visiting Vidal Ramos, how they got to know the street and what was their connection with it.

Gaio and Gouveia (2007, p. 3, our translation) define identity as an emitter concept, since "[...] it refers to a dynamic phenomenon between the political dimension, the territorial tangible and the results of social,
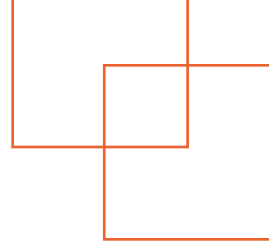
economic, technological interactions of people in space, while image is a receiving concept, since it demonstrates the judgement of the local public". Then, seeking to understand the image of Vidal Ramos for its audience, the second part of the interview began with the following question: "what do you think of Vidal Ramos Street? Without inciting positive or negative answers, 5 participants started their talks with positive points about the street. E2, E3, E5, E6 and E7 spoke about their aesthetic perceptions of the street. The other 2 participants talked about negative points of the street, with safety (E4) and lack of current incentive (E1) being their first perceptions. Table 2 presents the main points raised by the interviewees regarding the street.
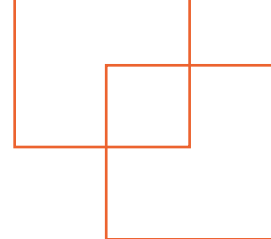
Table 2: Main points raised by interviewees to the question "what do you think of Vidal Ramos Street?

Interviewee	Answer
E1	Highlighted the organization of spaces, lack of safety and "democratization" of the space
E2	Sees the aesthetic organization of the street as positive
E3	Mentions safety, beauty and technology as strong characteristics of the place
E4	Worries about the lack of security
E5	Not satisfied with the lack of marketing incentive
E6	Highlighted the beauty an cleanliness of the street
E7	Considers positive the idea of an outdoor mall

Source: authors (2019).

The following is an overview of the interviewees. Interviewee E1 explains that she arrived after the street was revitalized, having her store at Vidal Ramos a little over 1 year ago. She talked about the Saturday street fairs, where "[...] the intention was to bring representativeness and awareness to the street, more conscious purchasing, but it lacked incentive" (E1, our translation). He also mentions that the street is not as safe as it seems, but that this image is sold because it is "[...] the safest in the center, which does not mean that it is that safe. He also explains that he likes "[...] the climate of the street, the bohemian climate, not having an age group or gender, it's a very democratic street". She quotes that "[...] I don't see myself leaving Vidal Ramos" (E1, our translation).

Interviewee E2 talked about the opportunity of revitalization of the street, where she has two stores of her own, "[...] I own a plus size fashion store and a tailoring one " (E2, our translation), and about the opportunity to join the ACIF to "[...] revitalize and rescue the customer to the center

of Florianópolis" (E2, our translation). About her perception of the street, she says that "[...] to attract the customer, we have to do something that brings some joy to the street, where the customer comes to the street, some cultural attraction. So we started doing Sábado Vidal, where street fairs took place on a Saturday every month". Also, E2 says that the mix of stores is very diverse, "[...] we have from a store to sharpen knives to a beauty salon specialized in curls. There are 98 shopkeepers at Vidal Ramos, so there's room for everyone.
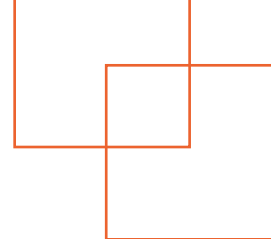
Interviewee E3, manager of an electronics and cell phone parts store, says the public is very diverse, which helps in the sales of products in the store where he works. Another very positive point for him is the fact that Vidal Ramos has wi-fi access and electrical outlets on the streets, allowing for a "[...] more technological character" (E3, our translation). He also says the security and beauty of the street are "[...] exceptional," but that it should be closed to cars, which he believes would be a big step to attract more customers.

Interviewee E7 says that "[...] Vidal is a very beautiful street, the most beautiful in the center of the city, this helps a lot at the moment of sale, since people feel comfortable to enter the stores, to go out, to drink something in the street and to enter other stores again". He also explains that Vidal Ramos' big difference in relation to a mall is that "[...] it's in the open air. I think people only prefer shopping malls on rainy days, but on a beautiful day with clear skies, it's much more attractive to buy while seeing the blue sky". About the revitalization, she mentions that "[...] it made all the difference. Saying we have a store in Vidal Ramos is much more attractive than saying we are on any other street in the center. That attracts a very diverse public.

After the phase of interviews with people who work in Vidal Ramos stores, we began to interview those who were buying on the street. Next, the interviews with these customers is detailed.

E4, a 24-year-old interviewee, said "[...] I like shopping here at Vidal because I can buy things for work, eat something, buy clothes for my mother and my daughter," but she explains that she doesn't feel so safe. She says that "[...] I think it's a safe street in comparison to others in the city center, but I find it very far away and empty in not very busy hours. She also says that "[...] the sidewalks are very tidy, I don't have to watch where I'm going to walk on, I like that.

Interviewee E5, 20 years old, was sitting in a pastel shop[1] when he was approached. He said that "[...] it's the best place to eat pastel in Florianópolis. And that "[...] it's all very clean, very nice, there's no garbage on the

floor like in the rest of the center, I can sit in the street eating something and watching time go by, there's even wi-fi, that helps a lot, I hang around here listening to my music".

The 38-year-old interviewee E6 said he was at work lunchtime, so "[...] I take the opportunity to go down to Vidal and relax sitting on the benches. It's very nice to see the beauty of the street. And there is always time to buy a little present for my girlfriend or my mother". He also explained that "[...] I feel very good here. It's like being on a street in the countryside of some country in Europe, it's all very clean".

Thus, and according to the case study described above from the interviews, it is observed that Vidal Ramos Street, after its revitalization, has become an important territorial place branding space, since it reaches different audiences in its territory, being an important shopping space in historical center of the city of Florianópolis.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In order for place branding strategies to have visible results, effort from different angles is fundamental, seeking to mobilize the issues of architecture and urbanism, public policies, entrepreneurs and the local community. Identifying and valuing the identity of the place together with its potentials contributes to the creation of places with unique meanings. The function of place branding is not to create an image about the place. It can be considered a collective construction that evaluates spaces and gives meaning, promoting interaction between stakeholders in order to provide unique experiences. The case presented in this article about Vidal Ramos Street showed that fashion is an element present in the culture of the people who frequent Vidal Ramos Street, not only because of purchasing, but also because of the symbolic atmosphere that was created over time in this place. Place branding is responsible for this process of re-signifying places and, in this case, it follows that this place, as would a person, has built over time, by different influences, its identity, personality and character; and, because it is about fashion, style is added here as a factor to be considered. By thinking of place branding as a strategic tool for the promotion of places, it indicates a look towards the collective and towards action in a multidisciplinary sphere, because places are not static, as subjects experience unique experiences, places go through a cyclic process of resignification and new experiences.
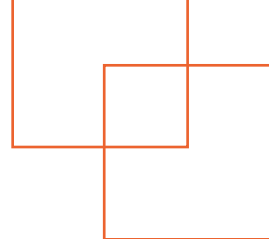
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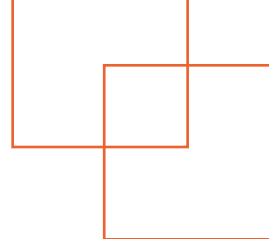
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