DECODING URBAN LANDSCAPES THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF PLACE NAMES AND IMAGINARIES

Place names as connecting thread in urban analysis

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Starting ideas

- When thinking in their environment, citizens create labels for every geographic entity existing in their mental map.

- Toponyms acquire then a main role in the moment a place is designated.

- Toponymy is applied to the territory, but also defines it. The act of naming is essential while constructing the *feel of place*.

- Therefore, place name's significance is connected to a society.

- So place names may be useful tools for decoding urban territories and societies.
Proposal

• Place names connect landscapes (objective representations of reality/geographic entities) and imaginaries (empirical interpretation of reality), but also overlap with them.
• Place names play a essential role as thread in geographical analysis.
Proposal

Hypothesis:

Place names, landscape and imaginaries converge in an integrated and complete dialog in which they reciprocally serve as links between citizens and territories.

Aim:

E(valuate) the role of place names in the interpretation of territorial reality, demonstrating their function as connecting thread in territorial analysis linking geographic entities with the perception of the citizens.
Historic city:
- High immaterial cultural heritage value because of the testimoniality of its place names.
- Great amount of consolidated place names

Touristic city:
- High influence of visitors in place naming
- Important role of place names in signs (or viceversa)

Metropolitan city:
- Commuting city. New urbanization. Heterogeneous place naming.
Previous work

Starting ideas

Proposal

Study case

Previous work

Research work

Conclusions

Future work

Unidades de paisaje y borde urbano en Toledo

Proposal of a Urban Landscape Catalogue of Toledo

Units as connecting thread in urban analysis

Proposal through the analysis of physical and non-physical factors of the territory.

Twenty four urban landscape units identified. Landscape units consists of portions of territory with consistency and internal coherence.

Study case

PLACE NAMES

These units aspire to be reference for the diagnosis and the management of the city as they identify the problems of the city at a local-scale and the city fracture areas.

Previous work

LANDSCAPE IMAGINARIES

Imaginaries (collected through interviews, mental maps, participating observations, etc.) served to add to the study the perceptive dimension of the city and to validate, modify or delete the different landscape units.

Future work
Starting ideas

The role of place names in linking reality with perceptions configurating the “essence” of the place (i.e. the city).

Previous work

- Labels and thread of ideas of place
- PLACE NAMES
- LANDSCAPE
- IMAGINARIES
- Result of the interpretation of urban space
- Perceptions that require being expressed

Proposals

Study case

Previous work

Research work

Conclusions

Future work
Place names change their denotative meaning and, obviously, its depth depending on the entity they designate and on the territory the they see. Toponyms are a connecting point between Man and the Land and carry with them much cultural significance. (...), they may change over time; they may appear, disappear, and re-appear elsewhere; and they may carry with them the hopes and challenges of a people, their language, culture and identity (Kerfoot 2009).

Toponymy provides significant information for evaluating the processes of transformation and change undergone by a territory (Tort 2003).

A place must have a name that can be remembered, because without a name, a place does not exist. (Raivo 1998)

Users acquainted not only with the place name, but also with the place, (...), feel a certain emotion, when they read the name on the map. Reading the name activates their emotional ties, their “feel of a place” (Jordan 2009).

Place names in maps work for geographers as the rescue of lost landscapes: there they see territories, uses, perceptions, elements they compare with other informations to recover perhaps ancient landscapes and contrasting stages in the evolution of the places (Martínez de Pisón 2010).

Naming is power - the creative power to call something into being, to render the invisible visible, to impart a certain character to things (Tuan 1991).

Toponyms are a connecting point between Man and the Land and carry with them much cultural significance. (...), they may change over time; they may appear, disappear, and re-appear elsewhere; and they may carry with them the hopes and challenges of a people, their language, culture and identity (Kerfoot 2009).

Previous work

Research work

Starting ideas

Research work

Conclusion

Future work

PLACE NAMES AS CONNECTING THREAD IN URBAN ANALYSIS

Decoding urban landscapes through the analysis of place names and imaginaries
Starting ideas

Urban landscape and place names

Approaches

→ Place name as geographic identifier

→ Place name role in the configuration of the city

→ Place names as tools

→ Place names reference evolves

Future work
Decoding urban landscapes through the analysis of place names and imaginaries

PLACE NAMES AS CONNECTING THREAD IN URBAN ANALYSIS

Place name as Geographic identifier

Starting ideas

Proposal

Study case

Other information and materials, papers, etc.

Statistical sources

Survey

Census

Previous work

Statistical sources

Census

Survey

Cartographic sources

Official Cartography of the local development plan.

Self production

Cartography of landscape catalogue of Toledo

Research work

Field techniques

Fieldwork

Participant observations.

Interviews/Dinamic surveys

Interviews with residents and visitors.

Conclusions

Future work
Place name role in the configuration of the city
Decoding urban landscapes through the analysis of place names and imaginaries
PLACE NAMES AS CONNECTING THREAD IN URBAN ANALYSIS

Place names as tools

Starting ideas
Proposal
Study case
Previous work
Research work

Conclusions
Future work
Place names reference evolves

Starting ideas
Proposal
Study case
Previous work
Research work
Conclusions
Future work
Research work

Imaginaries and place names

Approaches

→ Role of place names in the configuration of imaginaries

→ Signposting, ectoponymy and immaterial cultural heritage variables

Starting ideas

Proposal

Study case

Previous work

Research work

Conclusions

Future work
Role of place names in the configuration of imaginaries

Starting ideas

→ Dynamic surveys
→ Interviews
→ Participant observations

Proposal

Study case

Previous work

Research work

Conclusions

Future work

PLACE NAMES AS CONNECTING THREAD IN URBAN ANALYSIS

Decoding urban landscapes through the analysis of place names and imaginaries
Starting ideas

Proposal, y, testimoniality, imageability

Study case

Previous work

Research work

Conclusions

Future work

PLACE NAMES

LANDSCAPE IMAGINARIES
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Proposal

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Future work

Decoding urban landscapes through the analysis of place names and imaginaries
PLACE NAMES AS CONNECTING THREAD IN URBAN ANALYSIS

LANDSCAPE

RESULT OF THE INTERPRETATION OF URBAN SPACE

PLACE NAMES

LABELS AND THREAD OF IDEAS OF PLACE

IMAGINARIES

PERCEPTIONS THAT REQUIRE BEING EXPRESSED

Explained by...

Identifies...

Infused of...

PLACE NAMES AS CONNECTING THREAD IN URBAN ANALYSIS

LANDSCAPE IMAGINARIES

C ONCLUSIONS

FUTURE WORK
Future Work

Starting ideas

Proposal

- Evaluate the level of interaction between place names, imaginaries and landscape.

Study case

- Valuate the role of place names as thread in territorial analysis and deepen in their role as information tool of territory beyond linguistics and semantics.

Previous work

Research work

Conclusions

Future work
Thank you for your attention!

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