

Picasso's *Guernica*: The Strength of an Art Brand in Destination e-Branding

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Introduction

Places, and their corresponding public authorities, increasingly perceive branding as a powerful tool for raising visibility. This in turn attracts tourism, investment, and company relocation and thus enhances the cultural profile of the place (Kotler et al., 1999). From local development to marketing strategies and tourism, place branding is increasingly being applied in a range of contexts. Within these contexts, art is often recognized for its function in branding. While art has cultural value in itself, its representational and interpretable nature makes it a natural brand asset. However, the strategic management of brand assets faces many operative hurdles before it can become an effective local development tool. In line with more widespread product branding, one of the most difficult tasks is the measurement and monitoring of brand impact.

New digital media offer fresh opportunities for evaluating brand value. The media play a key role in shaping place identity and image, and in communicating place-associated traits (both positive and negative) to consumers (Currid and Williams, 2009; Hausmann, 2012). A significant part of a place's visibility and brand is channelled through the media, from newspaper articles to photographs. Online tools that have been developed over the past decade make possible the measurement of this visibility, in terms of the amount of media devoted to a particular place. We are able to evaluate how people "see" a place or its cultural associations before physically interacting with a place.

This study addresses the challenge of analyzing and monitoring brand effectiveness. It adopts a practical approach to identifying and measuring the impact of a given art brand on tourist flows. The focus is the number of visitors to Gernika, a tourist destination in the Basque Country in northern Spain, and related appearances of the destination (and its key associations) in the online news media. Pablo Picasso's 1937 masterpiece *Guernica* has brought the small Basque town unusual fame. The painting exerts an important influence on the number of visitors to Gernika. This study examines the news items that Google News offers for the town of Gernika and the *Guernica* artwork (which adopts the Spanish spelling of the Basque town) and the impact of these news items on tourist numbers. As the artwork hangs in the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, 500 kilometres from Gernika, the case creates a laboratory with favourable conditions for isolating the influence of the media (about *Guernica*) in attracting visitors to Gernika, since tourists do not travel to the town to see the actual artwork. Of course, brand equity – the accumulated strength of a brand – comprises many elements: association, awareness, perceived quality, customer loyalty and meaning (Aaker, 1996). The measure of brand impact, then, is really a measure of the impact of the town's *brand association* with the painting, which is made visible through the online media (also part of brand awareness). In other words, the study addresses the following question: *How much tourism, if any, can be attributed to the brand association of Guernica made visible through the online media?*

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The methodological interest of this article lies in the experiment carried out using Google News and the subsequent quantification of the impact of online media branding on the number of visitors and their spending in a given tourist destination. The article first provides an introduction to the research field of place branding and the role that art can play in branding. It then introduces the case of Gernika and Picasso's renowned painting *Guernica*. During the Spanish Civil War, Nazi bombers launched the first-ever saturation-bombing raid against the civilian population of Gernika at the request of General Francisco Franco, inspiring the theme of Picasso's work. The article next presents the research objectives and methodology as well as the results of the study analyzing the link between appearances of Gernika and *Guernica* on the Web and the economic impact of visitors to the town. It finally offers conclusions and recommendations for future research.



Art in Place Branding: Identifying Cultural Destinations

Place Branding Practices and Art in Branding

Place branding is currently seen as an important element in place development. Within the general framework of place marketing, the branding of places, cities or countries is a crucial instrument for increasing internal and external attractiveness in the realm of global competition. Many authors have cited the importance of branding as a marketing strategy applied to places (Anholt, 2005; Ashworth and Page, 2011; Hospers, 2011; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005; Kotler et al., 1999; Kotler and Gertner, 2002; Pike, 2002,

2009; Rainisto, 2003), at the same time highlighting the difficulties inherent in influencing and managing the process from within.

Although place branding is not a new concept, branding strategies have gained in popularity over the last two decades as the need for distinction and visibility has increased. This need has arisen from fierce competition in the face of globalization: the increased mobility of people, goods, and information and the expanding borders (or lack thereof) of business location. Modern digital media posit people and entities as "seen" by wider audiences while at the same time risking invisibility amidst an excess of information. Thus the typical targets for place branding strategies are business visitors and tourists, residents and skilled workers, business and industrial investment, and export markets (Kotler et al., 1999). Effective place or destination branding requires strategic and operational ability and skills. Equally, place branding strategies involve the generation of brand equity, including a brand identity and a brand image, and proper communication of the brand image (Rainisto, 2003).

Culture, and art in particular, can have compelling functions in branding. Like a brand, art is representational (Schroeder, 2005) and can add value to businesses and regional economies (McNicholas, 2004). Culture and brands are semiotic constructs that signal a spectrum of meaning. For example, the "Mac" brand not only signifies a line of technology products but also represents innovation and a corporate philosophy. Similarly, the Sydney Opera House draws associations with the high-culture opera, dance and music companies that perform at the venue while also serving as a place icon for Australia (Colbert, 2003). Art museums and even individual artworks can represent specific

Acknowledgements

This work draws on research carried out by the Art4pax Foundation for the Gernika town council in 2009.

ABSTRACT

Places and their public authorities increasingly perceive art branding as a tool for raising place visibility, attracting investment and tourism, and enhancing their cultural profiles. Online news aggregators offer new potential for measuring the degree to which places associated with art are "seen" in the media. The authors design and test a method for evaluating the effectiveness of art brand association and awareness in place marketing. The work draws upon a case study of Gernika, a town made famous by Picasso's 1937 painting *Guernica*. The masterpiece hangs in the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, 500 kilometres from Gernika, yet influences the number of visitors to the town. Thus Gernika is a useful laboratory for testing an art brand's impact on visitors because *Guernica* is not nearby to influence the data. The approach developed may also be used to help determine the value of advertising in the online media.

KEYWORDS

Art-led place branding, art brand, brand awareness, place marketing, brand associations, monitoring tools

artistic styles and a broader sense of history, prestige and creativity (Caldwell, 2000). Brands and culture are “representational texts” (O’Reilly, 2007). While the reading of these texts depends in part on how their producers create them, meaning also depends on how consumers receive and interact with them. Meaning is constantly reworked through social and cognitive processes (Potts et al., 2008). This diversity, or “multivocality,” of meaning allows a brand to resonate with a broader audience, heightening its visibility and increasing its value. To be sure, art has cultural value in itself and is most often created for purposes beyond branding. This article simply points out that, because of its representational nature, art is easily incorporated into branding strategies, if not a natural brand creator itself.

Specific Place Branding Strategies

Place branding strategies are predominantly based on one or more of the following anchor factors (Ashworth, 2009; Art4pax Foundation, 2009):

- personality association (Don Quixote and Castilla-LaMancha and Spain; Mozart and Salzburg; the Beatles and Liverpool)
- signature- and flagship-building and singular artworks (the Sydney Opera House, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and, travelling through history, the Leaning Tower of Pisa and the Egyptian Pyramids)
- hallmark events (sports or cultural events such as the Olympic Games or the European Capital of Culture)

- local products and specialties (Bordeaux and wine; Gouda and cheese; Parma and ham)
- high-impact transportation, research and knowledge infrastructure (Trans-Siberian Railway and Russia; MIT and Boston; CERN and Geneva)

These spaces, goods and events can bring economic, social and cultural value to places. An effective branding strategy simply adds to that value, by increasing the visibility of a place and generating further economic activity.

This article draws upon a case study of brand association. Brands can increase place visibility by associating localities with well-known personalities and images. Places can establish links to artists (musicians, composers, visual artists, writers), philosophers, natural scientists, politicians, historical figures, contemporary individuals or groups, and even fictional characters (Sherlock Holmes, James Bond). Additionally, place associations can be triggered by specific artworks (Michelangelo’s *David*, Picasso’s *Guernica*) or events (Woodstock, Bayreuth).¹ The imagery and character of place can also be bolstered through fictional frameworks, such as Durham in the Harry Potter films or the landscape of New Zealand as Middle Earth in the *Lord of the Rings* film series. Of course, as Ashworth (2009) points out, not all associations are positive or even desired by the affected cities or regions. Whether attempting to overcome negative publicity or simply trying to raise awareness about a place, local and regional authorities can devise branding strategies to create or promote positive associations with place. This process advertises places and adds symbolic value to interacting with them.

RÉSUMÉ

Les localités et leurs autorités publiques montrent un intérêt grandissant pour une stratégie de marque associée à l’art afin d’accroître leur visibilité, d’attirer investissements et tourisme et d’améliorer leur profil culturel. Les agrégateurs de nouvelles offrent de nouvelles possibilités de mesurer à quel point les endroits associés à l’art sont “vus” dans les médias. Les auteurs conçoivent et mettent à l’essai une méthode pour évaluer l’efficacité d’une marque associée à l’art et la notoriété dans le marketing d’un lieu. La recherche se fonde sur l’étude du cas de Guernica, petite ville rendue célèbre par la toile “Guernica” peinte par Picasso en 1937. Le chef-d’œuvre est exposé au musée de la Reine Sofia à Madrid, à 500 kilomètres de Guernica et, pourtant, il influe sur le nombre de visiteurs de la ville. Celle-ci est ainsi un laboratoire utile pour mettre à l’essai l’impact sur le tourisme d’une marque associée à l’art, car la ville n’est pas à proximité et ne peut donc influencer sur les données. L’approche développée peut aussi aider à déterminer l’importance de la publicité dans les médias en ligne.

MOTS CLÉS

Stratégie de marque d’un lieu par l’art, marque d’une œuvre d’art, notoriété de la marque, marketing d’un lieu, associations de marques, outils de suivi

Still, many place associations are created in the absence of a specific branding strategy. O'Reilly (2007) points out that brands are constructed not only managerially but also socially (Potts et al., 2008). Brand meaning is subject to the cognitive and collective processes of consumers. As we have seen, this is especially true for art brands. In places where brands naturally arise from social processes, cities and regions may stand to gain from a complementary managerial strategy. Targeting strategies could serve to attract more tourists and other visitors, exportation, talent, skilled workers and new residents. But before and after strategies are designed or implemented, how do we identify and measure the effects of brand associations?

The Challenge of Monitoring Art Brand Value

Caldwell and Coshall (2002) measure museum brand associations through repertory grid analysis, which provides insight into the strength of certain images in attracting museum visitors. However, the method falls short of offering any quantitative assessment of the impact of these associations. The survey method, for its part, is costly, time-consuming and not easily accessible to brand managers seeking to monitor the progress of their strategies. To our knowledge, no method has been developed for identifying and evaluating the economic value of art-related brand associations, which we see as a useful tool for brand managers in developing sustainable strategies.

Google News is a free tool accessible to the public that provides data on the number of news items available from news outlets worldwide about a certain keyword within a given period. Using this tool, we devise a method for brand

managers to evaluate a brand's visibility in the international online media. To develop our technique, we draw upon a case study of tourism in Gernika, a place allegedly branded by Picasso's 1937 masterpiece *Guernica* without any marketing strategy implemented by regional or local authorities.

The Case of Gernika and Guernica

Located a short distance from Bilbao, Gernika is a small coastal town on the Bay of Biscay with a population of approximately 16,244. Founded in 1366, it lies at the heart of a rural setting and the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Urdaibai. Administratively, it is part of the province of Biscay within the autonomous region of the Basque Country in Spain.

Gernika has been the symbolic heart of Basque autonomy and freedom since the Middle Ages. Ancient laws, the *fueros*, still concede a unique tax and budget autonomy to the Basque provinces today. The historic Assembly House and the Arbol de Gernika, a centennial oak tree, are part of a museum that is a destination for tourists and other visitors. (For more on the symbolic importance of Gernika, see Raento and Watson, 2000.)

This symbolic site was one of the targets of Franco's troops during the Spanish Civil War (1936–39). In 1937 the Nazi Legion Kondor was sent to destroy the centre of Gernika in an air raid at the request of Franco as an operational trial on the eve of the Second World War. The bombing marked a turning point for the town and has since influenced many peace initiatives, including the creation of a Peace Museum in Gernika, the naming of Gernika as a UNESCO

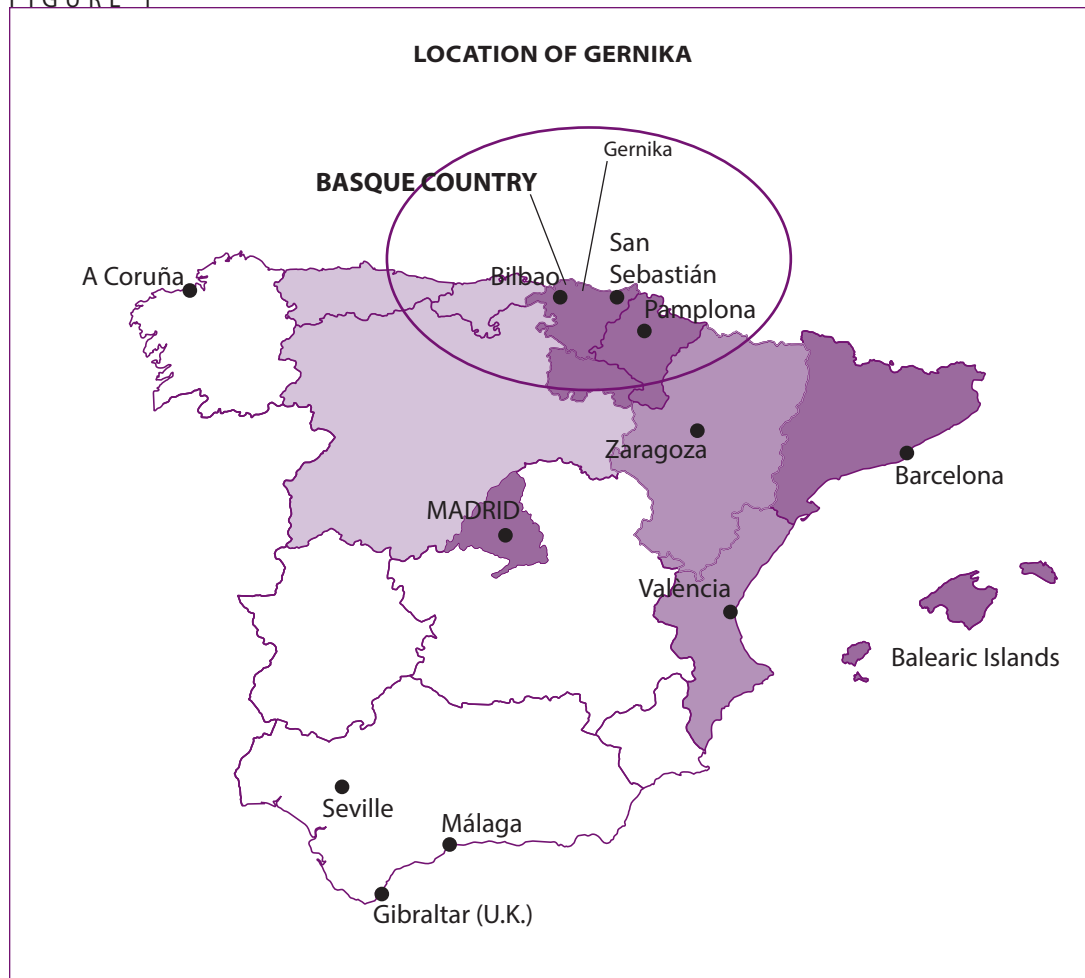
RESUMEN

Las autoridades públicas de diversos lugares perciben cada día más el desarrollo de una marca asociada al arte como una herramienta para dar mayor visibilidad al lugar, atraer inversiones y turismo, y mejorar sus perfiles culturales. Los recopiladores de noticias en línea brindan nuevas posibilidades de medir en qué grado los medios de comunicación asocian los lugares al arte. Los autores diseñaron y probaron un método para evaluar la efectividad para un lugar de asociarse al arte como marca del mismo, y su reconocimiento en la comercialización de destinos. El presente trabajo se inspira en un estudio de caso sobre Guernica, una ciudad que se hizo famosa por el cuadro que Picasso realizó en 1937 con el mismo nombre. La obra de arte se encuentra en el Museo Reina Sofía en Madrid, a 500 km de esa ciudad, sin embargo, tiene una incidencia sobre el número de personas que la visitan. La ciudad de Guernica sirve por lo tanto de laboratorio para estudiar el impacto del arte como marca sobre los visitantes, ya que el cuadro no se encuentra a proximidad como para influenciar los datos. El enfoque desarrollado puede ser también útil para determinar el valor de la publicidad en los medios en línea.

PALABRAS CLAVE

El arte hecho marca de un lugar, el arte como marca, reconocimiento de marca, comercialización de un lugar, asociaciones con la marca, herramientas de monitoreo

FIGURE 1

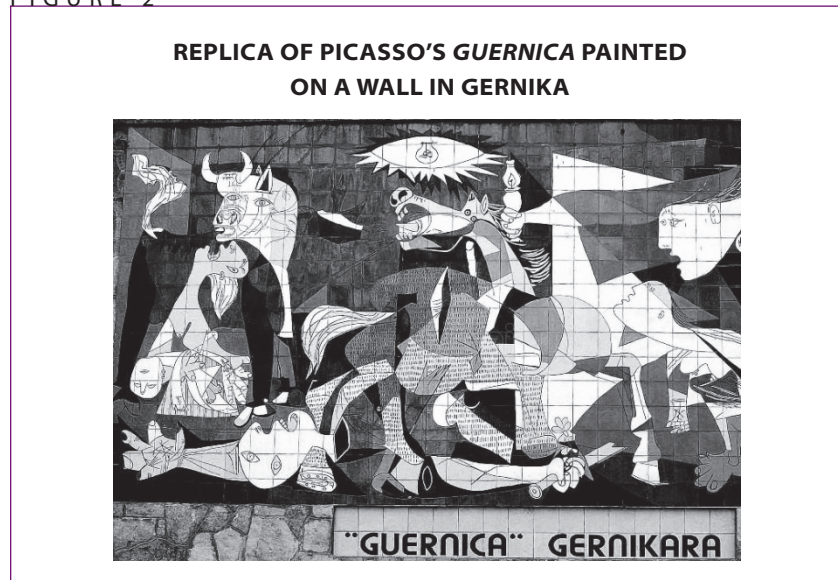


City of Peace and of course the first reaction to the bombing – the creation of *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso. Picasso, deeply affected by the massacre, commemorated the event by painting a mural for the Spanish pavilion at the 1937 World Exposition in Paris. With its impressive size (7.8 by 3.5 metres) – one of Picasso’s largest works – *Guernica* has become an artistic, historical and social icon.

The painting naturally created an art brand association with the town of Gernika, while its renown has helped boost awareness of the town. Though *Guernica* represents a singular historical event, the symbolism embedded in its imagery broadens its meaning. To some, the work represents a specific artistic style (Cubism and a particular use of light). To others, it exemplifies the politics of the Spanish Civil War. To others still, it represents a broader social commentary on the human cost of war. (For more specific interpretations, see Cantelupe, 1971; Gottlieb, 1964; Wischnitzer, 1985.) This wide range of interpretations expands the meaning of the work and consequently makes the art brand association appeal to a broader “consumer” base.

The painting has achieved even wider visibility through its rotation in prestigious museums internationally. From 1939 to 1981 it resided at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City. After the fall of Franco’s dictatorship

FIGURE 2



it was returned to Spain and was exhibited at the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid until 1992, when it was moved to its current home, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (Lanzarote Guiral, 2011). When the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao opened its doors in 1997, the Guggenheim had hoped to display *Guernica* as its inaugural centrepiece. However, the Reina Sofia and the government authorities in Madrid turned down the request, mainly for technical and security reasons. The painting is widely sought after within internationally prominent museum networks. Connections to the MoMA, the Prado and the Guggenheim Foundation have more than likely also helped promote visibility of the *Guernica* brand.

Because *Guernica* hangs in the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, 500 kilometres from the town of Gernika, the case presents a useful laboratory for isolating the influence, on visitorship, of the location-independent online media about the work – in the sense that tourists do not travel to Gernika to see the painting itself. Specifically, we test the hypothesis that a brand created through association with a famous work or personality attracts visitors to a place. Additionally, the small size of the Basque town, the limited number of associations with Gernika and the spelling duality (Gernika/*Guernica*) make it possible and intriguing to measure the branding associations of Gernika and brand visibility in the media.



Research: Objectives and Methodology

The aim of this study is to design and test a method for establishing, monitoring and verifying the impact of an art brand in the online media on tourism flows. We apply the method to the case of Gernika in the hope of developing a method that is applicable to other places and other brands. The research question is as follows: *How much tourism, if any, can be attributed to the brand association of Guernica made visible through the media?*

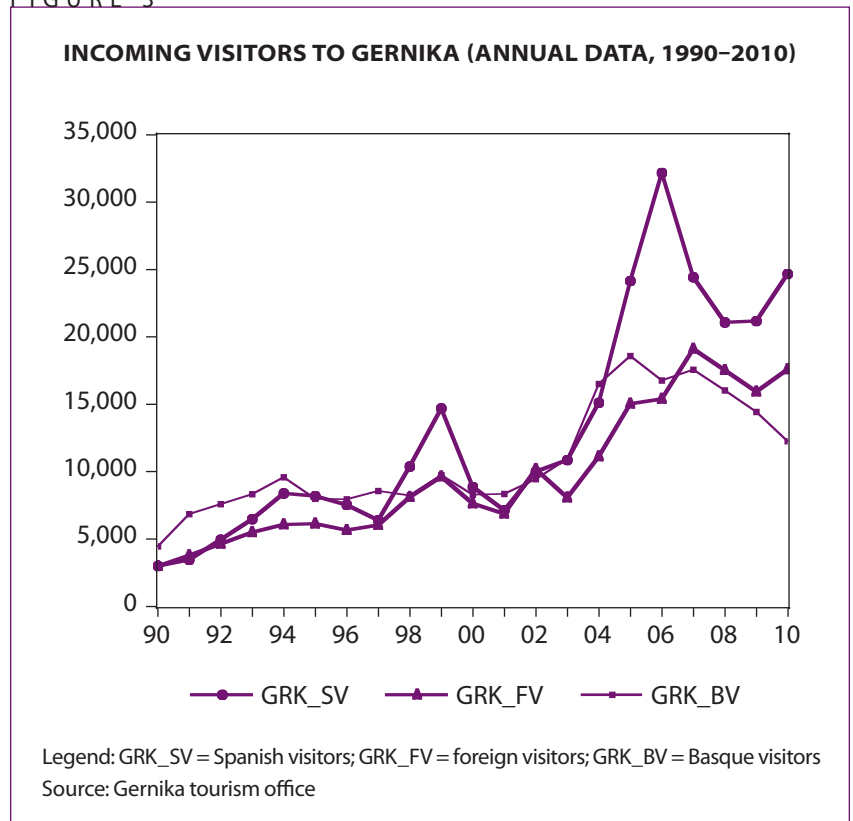
Launched in 2002, Google News is an automated news aggregator that provides data on the number of news items published by worldwide news outlets about a particular keyword within a given period. This allows users to build up time-series data, which can be analyzed with time-series statistical programs (in this case, E-Views software). Data on the visibility of the artwork and the town are obtained by measuring the presence of *Guernica* and the presence of

Gernika in Google News from January 1990 to December 2010. This distinction enables the model to isolate the influence, with respect to tourism flows, of media about the painting from media about the town.

Data on the quarterly number of tourist arrivals in Gernika from January 1990 to December 2010 is obtained from Basque Government Tourist Statistics. The Spanish Statistical Institute provides data for a control variable, the quarterly number of overnight stays in the province of Biscay. The control variable (overnight stays) is included to capture other variables that might influence tourism demand, such as income, prices, exchange rate and transportation costs.

A preliminary review of the data set shows tourism in Gernika (Figure 3) increasing at around the same time that media about Gernika and *Guernica* (Figure 4) increase. Part of the increase indicated in Figure 4 can be attributed to the advent of the Internet. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, online news coverage increased dramatically because Internet usage increased dramatically. Still, can the content of these news items have had an influence on the upswing in tourism in Gernika? Can online news items about Gernika's association with *Guernica* have influenced tourism to the small town?

FIGURE 3



Time-series analysis is employed to estimate a model. Augmented Dickey-Fuller tests show that the first differences of each variable are stationary. The transformed variables are ONS* (overnight stays in the province of Biscay), Guernica* (news items about *Guernica*), Gernika* (news items about Gernika) and GRK* (visitors to Gernika).

The dependent variable – the number of visitors to Gernika (GRK*) – is regressed against the number of overnight stays in Biscay (ONS*), the number of news items about *Guernica* (Guernica*) and the number of news items about the town (Gernika*). Causality tests show that overnight stays in Biscay – the control variable – influence visitor traffic to Gernika but not vice versa. Therefore, the model is not believed to have endogeneity. Seasonal dummy variables correct for outliers, accounting for the influence of tourist seasons on visitor traffic as well. The Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test is used to check serial autocorrelation. The White test is used to test heteroskedasticity and the Jarque-Bera statistic to test normality. The roots of the AR and MA processes are outside the unit circle. Residuals show white noise. The regressions are well adjusted. The results are displayed in Table 1.



Results

The results show evidence that changes in media visibility accompany changes in tourism to Gernika. Specifically, one more published news item on *Guernica* is associated with a 7.78 increase in visitors, while one more published news item on Gernika is associated with a 5.07 decrease in visitors, holding other factors constant. The positive relationship between changes in visits to Gernika and changes in media about *Guernica* is graphically depicted in Figure 5. As the plot suggests, increases in media about the artwork are associated with increases in visitorship and decreases in media are associated with decreases in visitorship. If Gernika’s art brand is defined by *Guernica*, then the art brand’s visibility through the online media is likely to influence visitor traffic in Gernika.

The results also support the notion that changes in media about the town of Gernika are related to changes in tourism, though perhaps in an unexpected way. The negative coefficient suggests, in this case, that media visibility is detrimental to tourism. This may be explained by the close association of Gernika, the cradle

FIGURE 4

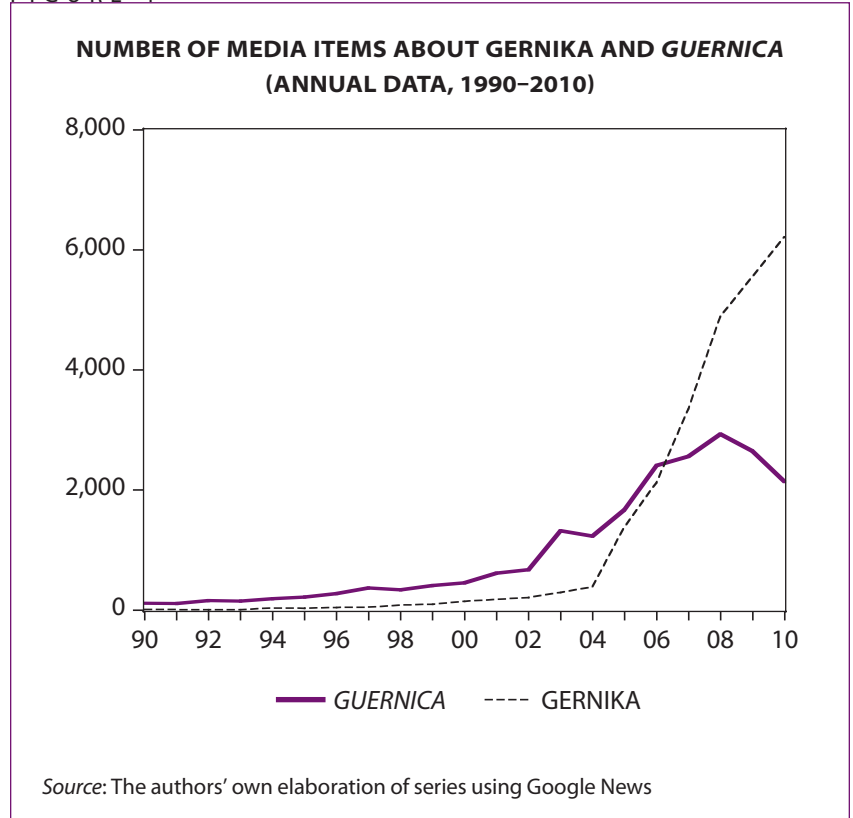


FIGURE 5

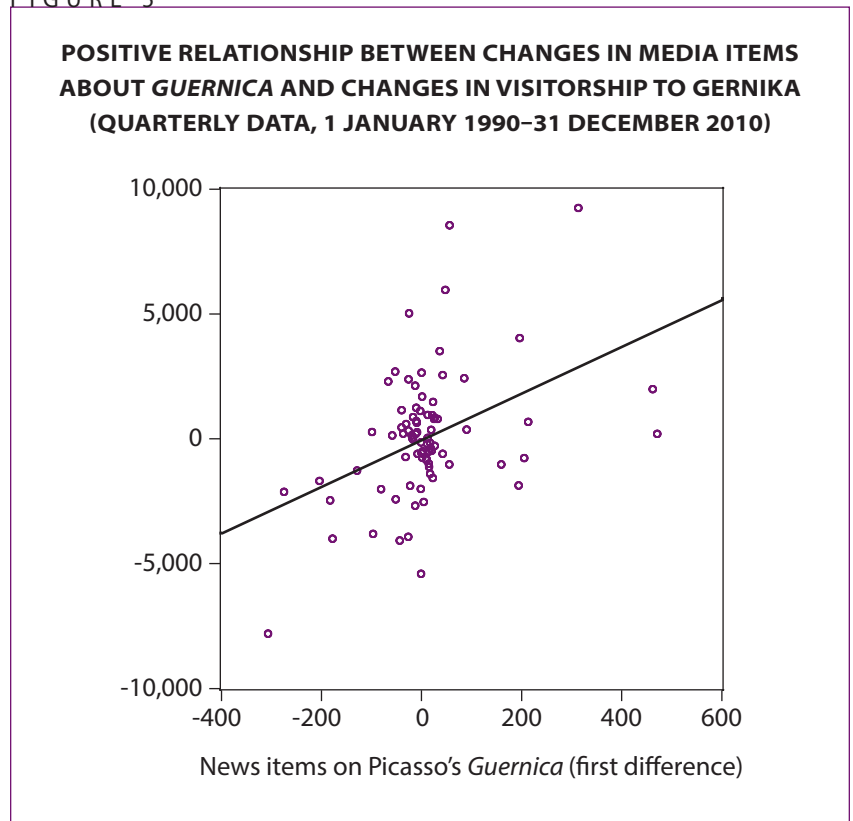


TABLE 1

REGRESSION FOR DEPENDENT VARIABLE, FIRST DIFFERENCE OF VISITORS TO GERNIKA – GRK* (QUARTERLY DATA, 1 JANUARY–31 DECEMBER 2010)				
Variable	Coefficient	Standard error	t-Statistic	Probability
Constant	-1058	464	-2.27	0.025
ONS*	0.077	0.004	18.05	0.000
Guernica*	7.78	2.49	3.11	0.026
Gernika*	-5.07	1.52	-3.31	0.001
Q2 (seasonal dummy)	-670	755	-0.88	0.378
Q3 (seasonal dummy)	9764	690	14.14	0.000
Q4 (seasonal dummy)	-5426	752	-7.21	0.000
N = 83				
R ² = 0.97		F-statistic = 284		Prob(F-statistic) = 0.00
Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test: F-statistic 0.124			Probability 0.29	
White heteroskedasticity test: F-statistic 1.00			Probability 0.45	
Jaque-Bera 2.32			Probability 0.16	
Augmented Dickey-Fuller unit root tests for variables:				
ADF test statistic for GRK*: -50.12			5% Critical Value -2.89	
ADF test statistic for ONS*: -12.91			5% Critical Value -2.89	
ADF test statistic for Guernica*: -13.59			5% Critical Value -2.89	
ADF test statistic for Gernika*: -6.58			5% Critical Value -2.89	
ADF test statistic for RESIDUALS: -5.13			5% Critical Value -2.89	
Legend:				
GRK* = first difference of GRK (visitors to Gernika), $\Delta GRK_t = GRK_t - GRK_{t-1}$				
ONS* = first difference of ONS (overnight stays in the province of Biscay), $\Delta ONS_t = ONS_t - ONS_{t-1}$				
Guernica* = first difference of <i>Guernica</i> (news items about <i>Guernica</i>), $\Delta Guernica_t = Guernica_t - Guernica_{t-1}$				
Gernika* = first difference of Gernika (news items about the town), $\Delta Gernika_t = Gernika_t - Gernika_{t-1}$				

of Basque identity, with Basque nationalist turmoil and violence. As Figure 6 shows, Google News items about Gernika and about ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna), a Basque separatist group, are closely correlated.

The graph shows that when media coverage of ETA increases, so does media coverage of Gernika. Because these two topics are presumably correlated, one might reasonably conclude that it is news about violence more than anything else that detracts from tourism to the town. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the magnitude of Guernica* is greater than that of Gernika*, which implies that the art brand of Picasso's masterpiece may have a greater impact on tourism than negative media.

To further support the soundness of the estimated model, we point out that the control variable – overnight stays in the province of Biscay – has the expected sign (Figure 7). A rise in provincial overnight stays is associated with a rise in visits to Gernika. Tourism changes in the same direction between both cases, as it should if ONS* is to capture the influence of business-cycle factors on visitor flows to Gernika (Figure 7).

Economic Impact of the Art Brand

We may quantifiably articulate this impact with information on the monetary value of each visitor to Gernika. In an economic impact study of tourism conducted in 2010, the Gernika town

council found the average net present value of each visitor to be €14.75 (most visits to Gernika are day stays), in a conservative scenario. This figure aggregates the impact on many sectors that benefit from tourism, such as restaurants, bars and cafés, hotels and other accommodations, shops, leisure activities such as offered by museums, and parking facilities and transport. According to the estimations in Table 1, a one-unit increase in news items about *Guernica* is associated with 7.78 new visitors to Gernika.² In 2010, the number of news items about *Guernica* was 2,182 (according to Google News), which generated between 15,274 and 17,456 new visitors to Gernika during the year. This would generate a total value of €225,292 to €257,476. In other words, the model estimates that, in 2010, every news item about *Guernica* created a net value of between €103 and €118 for the town of Gernika. The average value of one piece of advertising concerning Gernika through an art brand association in the media may fall within this range.

Implications for Art Brand Managers and Advertisers

These results support the hypothesis that an art brand made visible through the media can attract tourism. In other words, brand associations with a famous work of art can become effective instruments of place-making. The method employed here could also be developed as a tool for measuring and monitoring the impact of branding via online media on tourism flows. These results might be valuable inputs in the future development of a branding strategy by the town of Gernika. Picasso's *Guernica* is a positive association that attracts more visitors to the town than are discouraged by negative associations such as Basque nationalist turmoil. The local economic impact of the artwork's branding power could be more fully developed by implementing a proper cultural branding policy. Regional/provincial authorities have perhaps not given primacy to tourism promotion with regard to Gernika. In fact, more could be done to promote Picasso's *Guernica* and to promote Gernika as an all-season cultural destination and increase the average number of visitors to the town.

These results could also provide insight for future projects. Unconnected with *Guernica*'s influence, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao³ is completing feasibility studies for a satellite museum near the town of Gernika. The Biscay

FIGURE 6

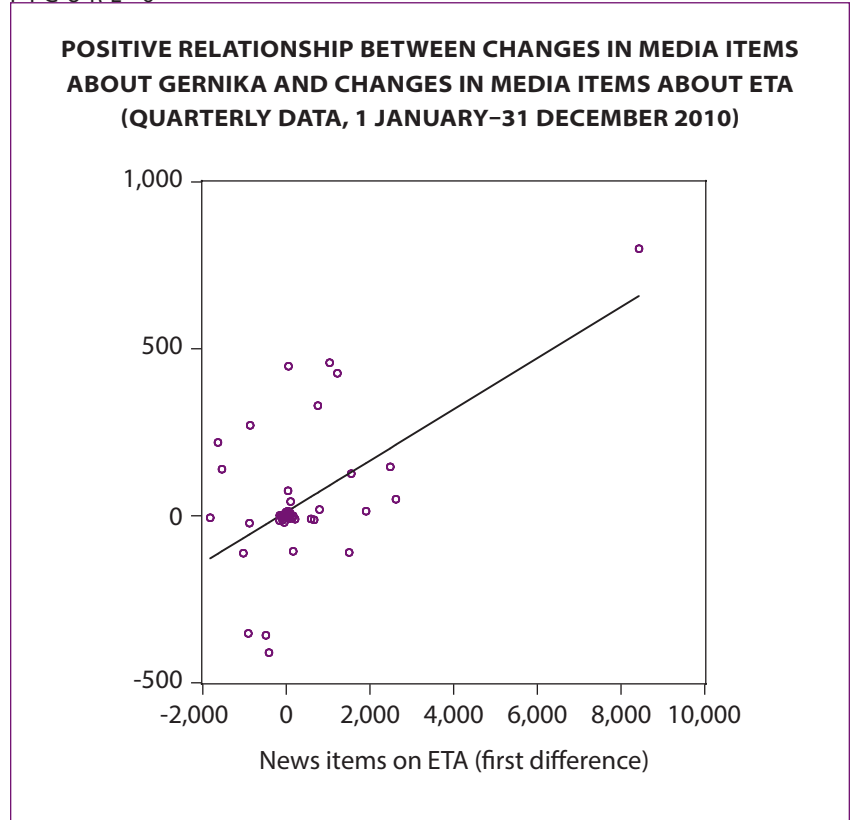
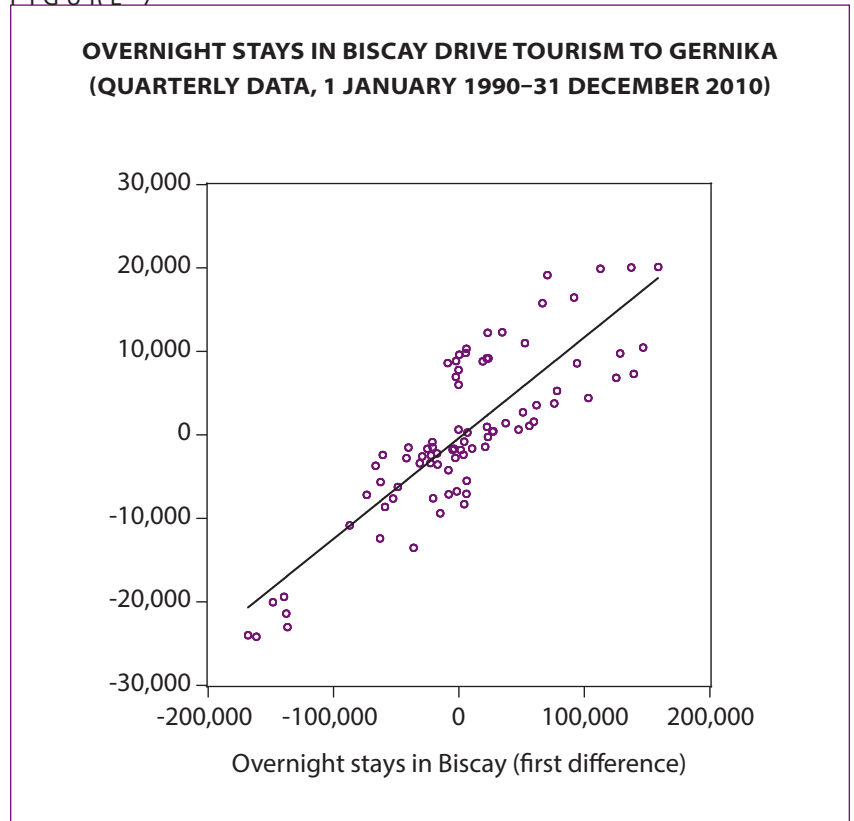


FIGURE 7



provincial council has allocated €1 million to fund environmental and economic impact studies and has pledged €100 million for construction (about half the estimated cost). But the Basque government, whose financial participation is crucial for the project to move forward, is still reluctant to undertake the expansion (Plaza, González-Flores and Galvez-Galvez, 2011). Whether this project will be approved remains to be seen. New information about the responsiveness of Gernika tourism to an art brand may inform the final decision.

In a broader context, the method developed here represents an interesting tool for place brand managers to evaluate and monitor brand values or branding strategies. The method could be tested in other places with other brands to further evaluate its validity. It could also be tested for branding impact through the media in other economic sectors – for example, a brand’s ability to attract investment or build performing arts audiences. Aside from the context of place branding, the method offers a tool for determining the value of advertising in the online media. Product and service marketers may be able to more efficiently purchase ad space based on the visibility of certain keywords and topics.

Nevertheless, certain shortcomings and considerations must be addressed before the precise estimates presented by this tool can be taken at face value. An art brand association made visible through the online media is just one of numerous factors that constitute brand equity. Additionally, the estimated model does not separate the influence of visibility through branding from that of the Internet boom. Finally, a means has to be found to optimize the selection of search terms for each case in order to focus on relevant “news” and “associations.”



Conclusions

This article presents a method for analyzing time-series analysis of Google News data in order to assess the effects of art brand associations and visibility on place marketing. The results of the case study show a positive relationship between the presence of Picasso’s *Guernica* in the online media and the flow of tourism to the town of Gernika. While negative associations related to Gernika and the Basque group ETA negatively affect tourism flows to the town,

information about both of these influences could be useful for place brand managers and destination marketers designing brand strategies. In building a strategy for branding a place through art, brand managers may now have a way of (1) identifying what socially constructed associations already exist with a place and measuring their influence; and (2) monitoring, and even predicting, the effectiveness of managerially constructed associations.

In addition to place brand managers and marketers, this method could be useful for advertisers seeking to purchase space in online media. The same time-series analysis could evaluate how different online media topics attract different levels of revenue, which could better inform purchasing decisions. The method presented here has implications for place marketers and advertisers alike.

The main conclusion to be drawn is that it could be useful for actors in art management – museums, galleries, public authorities – to monitor the brand associations of a given place and to link their branding and promotion activities to existing brand associations in order to reinforce the branding effect.

More research is needed in order to validate the method. Similar experiments should be conducted with different tourist destinations and types of brand associations. The research agenda calls for repetition of the experiment with different brands and destinations to determine more accurately the influence and sustainability of online news items in building brand power. Future studies may also enable us to compare these results with those of other place branding valuation studies to determine which method is more accurate, and may shed light on the true effectiveness of large-scale place branding investments.

The results show that art-related branding might have played an increasingly significant role in place-making strategies during the advent of online media. Because of its representational and semiotic characteristics, art can play an important part in place branding. With the right tools, we may be able to precisely define the role of art in place branding and marketing, further bridging the gap between the worlds of art and business.

Notes

1. Here, we mean events that were not set up as part of a place marketing strategy or were less related to commercial or economic interests.
2. More specific intervals can be calculated at different confidence intervals. For example, at a 90% level of confidence, the coefficient of the variable Guernica* has a confidence interval of [7.33, 8.23] visitors. This would produce a range of estimates of the art brand's media value.
3. For a complete list of academic works regarding Bilbao and its regeneration, go to www.scholars-on-bilbao.info. For studies on the Guggenheim Effect, see Bristow, 2010; González, 2006, 2011; Grodach, 2010; Plaza, 2006, 2008, 2010; Plaza, Tironi and Haarich, 2009.

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