

# Determinants of resident's satisfaction towards a city brand in the Moroccan context: a proposed model

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## **Determinants of resident's satisfaction towards a city brand in the Moroccan context: a proposed model.**

### **Résumé :**

Cet article examine la relation complexe entre les attributs de la marque de la ville et la satisfaction des résidents. En synthétisant les modèles existants et les recherches empiriques, l'étude identifie cinq dimensions clés influençant les perceptions des résidents : les activités, l'économie, les services publics, l'environnement et la socialisation. Ces attributs façonnent collectivement la satisfaction globale des résidents envers leur ville. Un nouveau modèle conceptuel est proposé, postulant que la performance d'une ville dans ces dimensions a un impact significatif sur la satisfaction des résidents. Ce modèle fournit un cadre pour comprendre l'interaction complexe entre les attributs de la ville et les expériences des résidents. L'article souligne l'importance de recherches empiriques supplémentaires pour valider le modèle proposé et explorer l'influence relative des différents attributs dans divers contextes urbains. En approfondissant notre compréhension de ces relations, les décideurs et les urbanistes peuvent élaborer des stratégies pour améliorer la satisfaction des résidents et favoriser des environnements urbains prospères.

**Mots clés :** Satisfaction des résidents, marque ville, modèle conceptuel, attributs de la marque de la ville.

**JEL Classification :** M31

**Type du papier :** Recherche théorique

### **Abstract:**

This paper examines the intricate relationship between city brand attributes and resident satisfaction. By synthesizing existing models and empirical research, the study identifies five key dimensions influencing resident perceptions: activities, economy, public services, environment, and socialization. These attributes collectively shape residents' overall satisfaction with their city. A novel conceptual model is proposed, positing that a city's performance across these dimensions significantly impacts resident satisfaction. This model provides a framework for understanding the complex interplay between city attributes and resident experiences. The paper underscores the importance of further empirical research to validate the proposed model and explore the relative influence of different attributes across diverse urban contexts. By deepening our understanding of these relationships, policymakers and urban planners can develop strategies to enhance resident satisfaction and foster thriving city environments.

**Keywords:** Resident satisfaction, city branding, conceptual model, city brand attributes.

**Classification JEL:** M31

**Paper type:** Theoretical Research

## 1. Introduction

Since the late 1970s, the rise of globalization (Levitt, 1983) has brought about major changes on a global scale. By fostering complex linkages between national and transnational economies, globalization has intensified competitive pressures between territories in both domestic and international markets. In response, countries, regions and cities have sought to differentiate themselves, creating a competitive landscape characterized by strategies aimed at achieving competitive advantage. This differentiation strategy is based on enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of a territory in order to secure a larger share of the global market for consumers, tourists, investors, businesses, capital and other resources. The antecedents of territorial promotion can be traced back to the 19th century as a means of gaining such a competitive advantage. In modern times, governments attach the paramount importance to cultivating a favourable image and reputation in the international community (Berrada, 2018). The imperative to enhance place attractiveness and differentiation has led to the emergence of place marketing, a discipline dedicated to cultivating unique identities and amplifying appeal to strengthen competitive positioning. While marketing traditionally originated within the commercial sphere, the past two decades have witnessed a growing application of marketing principles to non-commercial entities (Kotler and Levy, 1969). Place marketing aligns with the broader domain of public place management, which prioritizes the cultivation of a place's image, meaning, and hospitality (Meyronin, 2015). As a strategic subset of place marketing, place branding has emerged as a focal point in efforts to enhance image and reputation. While the Francophone literature predominantly views place branding as a strategic tool within place marketing, the Anglophone perspective often delineates it as a distinct discipline with close affinities (Berrada, 2018), commonly referred to as "place branding" itself.

The complex connection between city branding and resident satisfaction has become a key focus for urban scholars and policymakers (Son et al. 2023). As cities strive to attract residents, businesses, and tourists, it is crucial to cultivate a strong and positive brand identity. It is important to acknowledge that residents play a vital role in shaping a city's overall brand equity, making their satisfaction a priority (Eshuis et al. 2014).

The concept of 'place branding' has become a prominent focus in the field of place management over the last two decades (Marta Hereznjak, 2017). Among the plethora of proposed definitions, the conceptualization offered by Zenker and Braun (2010, 5) stands out for its comprehensiveness. They pose place branding as "a network of associations in the minds of consumers based on the visual, verbal and behavioral expression of a place, embodied by the objectives, communication, values and overall cultural orientation of the territory's stakeholders and, ultimately, the design of the territory". This definition effectively captures the multifaceted nature of place brands. However, the specific terminology used to describe place branding often varies according to the geographical scale in question, with distinctions being made between 'nation branding', 'destination branding' and 'city branding', the latter being the focus of this research.

Furthermore, as early academic contributions to marketing and place branding (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; van den Berg and Braun, 1999) have made clear, residents, businesses and visitors are the primary audiences for any place brand. Despite their central role, residents have often been marginalized in practice. In reality, they are indispensable contributors to the city branding process, moving beyond the status of passive beneficiaries to become active participants, partners and co-producers (Freire, 2009; Hospers, 2010; Olsson and Berglund, 2009). Contemporary research tends to focus on residents, with a subset of studies highlighting the importance of their participation in place branding strategies, arguing that its absence can lead to negative evaluations. Given the centrality of residents in shaping a city's identity and

experience, understanding their perceptions and satisfaction with place branding initiatives is paramount.

Residential satisfaction is a multifaceted construct that has been extensively investigated across disciplines including city branding, urban planning, psychology, and sociology (Zenker & Rutter, 2014; Mridha, 2023). Understanding its determinants is paramount for devising effective policies and strategies to enhance urban quality of life (Taecharungroj, 2016). Intertwined with place attachment and environmental psychology, residential satisfaction has been the subject of numerous studies. However, the phenomenon's complexity and methodological diversity have yielded a fragmented knowledge base (Taecharungroj, 2016; Zenker et al., 2013).

The Moroccan context presents a unique interplay of cultural heritage, economic dynamics, public services, environmental conditions, and social interactions, offering both challenges and opportunities for city branding (Belkadi, 2019). Morocco's rich cultural tapestry, strong community bonds, and evolving socioeconomic landscape necessitate a tailored approach to comprehending resident satisfaction.

While research on resident satisfaction with place branding initiatives has flourished in international settings, the Moroccan context remains relatively unexplored. This study aims to address this gap by conducting an in-depth examination of the determinants of resident's satisfaction towards a city brand in the Moroccan context. Through this case study, we seek to elucidate the factors influencing resident satisfaction within the distinctive cultural and socioeconomic milieu of Morocco. As a result, this study will investigate the following research question: What are the determinants of resident's satisfaction towards a city brand in the Moroccan context?

By critically examining the strengths and weaknesses of different models, this paper aims to contribute to the development of a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of residential satisfaction. The paper is structured as follows. First, we will delve into the concept of resident satisfaction, establishing a foundation for the subsequent analysis. Building upon this, the study will explore key determinants of resident satisfaction through a comprehensive review of existing models. Subsequently, we will focus on the specific factors influencing residents' satisfaction with a city brand. Finally, the paper will conclude by summarizing the key findings and proposing a model for the determinants of residents' satisfaction within the Moroccan context.

## **2. Concept of resident's satisfaction**

The concept of satisfaction has traditionally been a cornerstone of consumer behavior research, particularly in evaluating product interactions (e.g., Oliver, 1999). However, its application to the domain of place evaluation necessitates a broader perspective. Stedman (2002) proposes that satisfaction with a place transcends mere product consumption and instead represents a multidimensional summary judgment of the perceived overall quality of an environment. This place-based satisfaction hinges on an individual's assessment of a specific territory's ability to fulfill a multitude of needs, encompassing social interactions, access to services, and the inherent physical characteristics of the environment itself.

### **2.1. Utilitarian perspective**

The idea of utilitarian value, which is typically used in relation to products and services, can also be applied to places. While the original concept focused on tangible qualities such as product features or service efficiency, the fundamental principle remains unchanged: utilitarian value refers to the functional benefits and practical advantages that a place provides to its residents, visitors, or businesses. In the context of places, Guest and Lee (1983) offer a compelling utilitarian perspective on place satisfaction, defining it as the "utility value of a

place in fulfilling certain fundamental needs.". This conceptualization aligns with the emphasis on functional aspects of a place, encompassing factors such as accessibility and infrastructure, including efficient transportation networks, proximity to amenities, and the availability of essential services. It also involves safety and security, characterized by low crime rates, well-maintained public spaces, and reliable emergency services. Additionally, economic opportunities play a crucial role, with job availability, a business-friendly environment, and affordable housing being key components. Practical amenities like schools, hospitals, recreational facilities, and shopping centers further contribute to the utilitarian value of a place. In a similar way to the product-based perspective, utilitarian values in places can be easily compared across different locations. For example, residents can quickly evaluate the quality of public transportation. However, while these factors play a significant role in overall satisfaction, they may not evoke the same emotional attachment as hedonic values, such as a place's cultural heritage or natural beauty. It is crucial to consider that although utilitarian values may not be the primary driver of word-of-mouth marketing, they play a vital role in the long-term success of a place. A place with robust utilitarian characteristics is more likely to draw and maintain residents, businesses, and visitors, thus establishing a strong basis for overall place satisfaction. In essence, Guest and Lee (1983) posit that satisfaction with a place arises from the place's ability to provide for the practical needs of its inhabitants

## **2.2. Place satisfaction as an evaluative judgment**

Drawing parallels with established definitions of attitude (e.g., Zenker et al., 2013), satisfaction with a place can be productively understood as a summary judgment formed based on a collection of beliefs regarding a specific place. Similar to an attitude, place satisfaction represents an evaluative judgment of a spatial context (Stedman, 2002). This judgment, in turn, predisposes individuals to experience specific affective states (feelings) and engage in certain behavioral tendencies towards the place they inhabit.

Within the domain of place branding, resident satisfaction takes on a particular significance, often viewed as the central objective (Zenker & Martin, 2011). This emphasis stems from the understanding that satisfied residents act as crucial stakeholders in promoting a positive place brand image (Zenker & Rutter, 2014). For the purposes of this paper, resident satisfaction can be defined as the level of satisfaction that residents experience with the overall performance of the city brand.

Beyond its intrinsic value, resident satisfaction with a place can have a significant positive impact on various aspects of a community. Research has demonstrated that high levels of place satisfaction are associated with increased word-of-mouth (WOM) behavior (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002; Lam et al., 2004). Satisfied residents are more likely to promote their city or neighborhood to others, fostering a positive image and potentially attracting new residents or businesses. Furthermore, studies by Zenker and Rutter (2014) and Taechungroj (2016) suggest a link between place satisfaction and civic engagement within urban settings. Satisfied residents may be more inclined to participate in community activities, volunteer their time, and contribute to the overall well-being of their environment.

Given the multifaceted nature of place satisfaction and its far-reaching consequences for communities, understanding the factors that influence it becomes crucial. This complexity necessitates a closer examination of the various determinants that contribute to resident satisfaction with a place. The following sections will review existing models linked to residential satisfaction, highlighting their relevance and limitations. Subsequently, we will propose a conceptual model of the determinants of resident satisfaction within the Moroccan context. This conceptual model aims to shed light on the key elements shaping resident perceptions and experiences within Moroccan cities, providing a foundation for future research and practical applications in city branding and urban development.

### 3. Key determinants of resident's satisfaction: a review of models

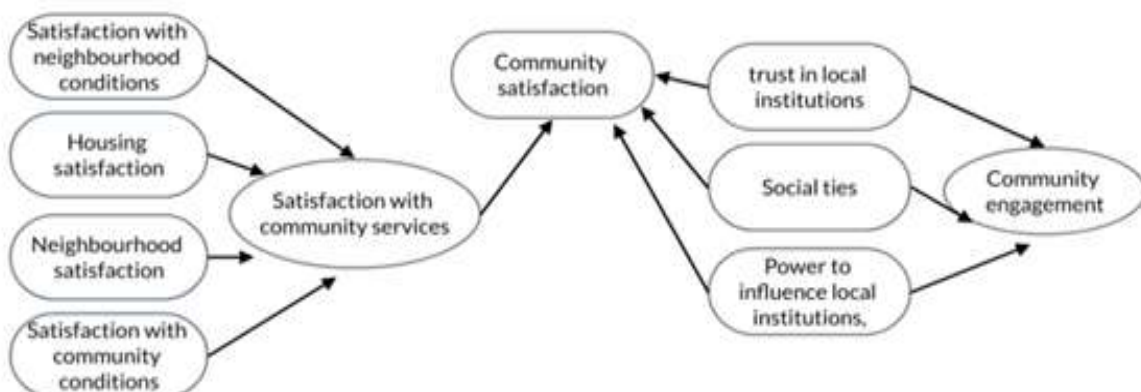
Evaluating residential satisfaction within the context of city branding necessitates a multifaceted approach. While empirical models provide valuable insights into the actual relationships between resident perceptions and various urban characteristics, theoretical models offer a framework for understanding the hypothetical underpinnings of these relationships. This allows for a complementary approach, where conceptual models grounded in theory can be empirically tested to refine understanding of resident satisfaction. As Francescato et al. (1979) emphasized, models serve as crucial reference points for interpreting research findings and identifying areas for further investigation. In the context of city branding, models can help clarify the relationships between urban features, resident perceptions, and ultimately, satisfaction with the city brand. Moore (2000) further highlights the role of models in capturing the dynamic interplay between variables and constructs, potentially predicting future resident sentiment. However, such predictive power may not always extend to explaining the causal mechanisms behind these relationships. Therefore, to delve into the theoretical foundations of residential satisfaction and its connection to city branding, the following section will explore various models drawn from different disciplines.

#### 3.1. A model of satisfaction with community services

This complex model of satisfaction with community services is presented in five stages (Grzeskowiak et al., 2003). The first stage highlights the most immediate determinants and the outcomes of satisfaction. The second stage introduces an additional outcome to the model, namely community engagement, demonstrating that community satisfaction leads to community engagement. The third stage incorporates two additional variables, namely trust in local institutions and the power to influence these institutions, to further explain variations in community service satisfaction, community satisfaction, and community engagement. The fourth stage focuses on factors added to the model to explain the determinants of satisfaction with community conditions, such as neighborhood condition satisfaction, neighborhood satisfaction, and housing satisfaction. Finally, the fifth stage includes satisfaction in various life domains, such as financial, social, family, and work life, to further explain variations in the primary constructs of the model.

Sirgy et al. (2000) and Sirgy and Cornwell (2001) have argued and empirically demonstrated that satisfaction with community services (government, business, and nonprofit services) as well as community conditions (physical, social, and economic aspects of the community) predict a significant portion of the variance in community satisfaction.

Figure 1: Grzeskowiak et al.'s model (2003)



Source: Grzeskowiak et al. (2003)

### 3.2. The CSI model

Zenker, Petersen, and Aholt (2009) introduce the Citizen Satisfaction Index (CSI), a novel conceptual framework and measurement tool designed to assess resident satisfaction and commitment to a city. The CSI leverages the strengths of existing research by drawing upon 18 established satisfaction scales and qualitative research findings. Through an iterative process, this knowledge base is condensed into a concise 21-question survey instrument.

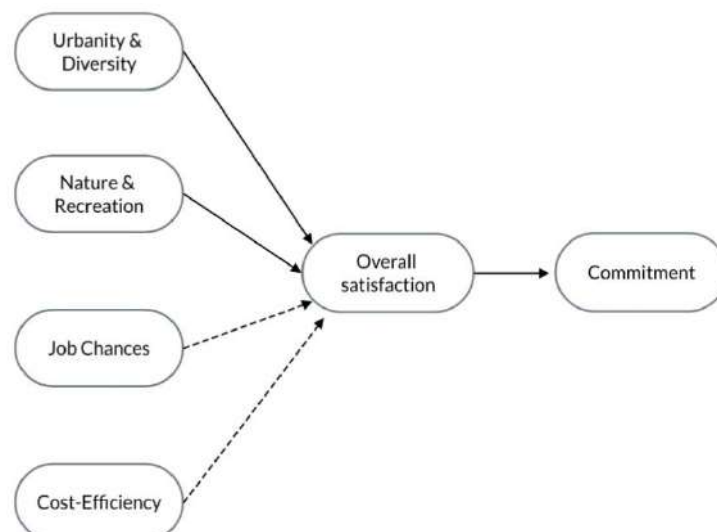
The CSI model identifies four key dimensions that significantly influence citizen satisfaction:

- **Urbanity & Diversity:** This dimension captures the allure of a big city, encompassing access to cultural offerings, a tolerant environment, and the presence of diverse populations.
- **Nature & Recreation:** This dimension reflects the desire for green spaces, low pollution levels, and a sense of tranquility within the urban environment.
- **Job Chances:** While not directly impacting overall satisfaction, job opportunities play an indirect role by shaping perceptions of other dimensions within the model.
- **Cost-Efficiency:** Similar to job opportunities, cost-efficiency exerts an indirect influence, affecting how residents perceive other satisfaction factors.

The effectiveness of the CSI model is supported by the study's application of confirmatory factor analysis and multidimensional scaling techniques. These techniques validate the four-factor structure of the model, demonstrating its ability to effectively capture the multifaceted concept of citizen satisfaction. Moreover, the CSI offers a standardized tool for city comparisons, fostering consistency within both urban research and place marketing efforts.

However, the authors acknowledge the inherent complexity of city perception, recognizing that the model excludes various potential influences on satisfaction. Furthermore, the CSI emphasizes residents' subjective perceptions of city characteristics, which may not always align with objective realities. This highlights the importance of considering resident perceptions, even when they differ from factual data, as these perceptions ultimately shape resident experiences and behavior within a city.

**Figure 2: The CSI model**



*Source: Zenker, Petersen et Aholt, (2009)*

### 3.3. Francescato et al.'s model (1979)

Francescato et al. (1979) present a comprehensive model that explores the intricate interplay between physical and behavioral elements within residential environments. Their focus lies on

understanding residential satisfaction as a dependent variable influenced by a multitude of factors. These factors encompass aspects like the availability of amenities, perceived convenience, management satisfaction, aesthetics (pleasant appearance), maintenance quality, sociodemographic similarity of neighbors, satisfaction with other residents, and residents perceived economic value of their dwelling.

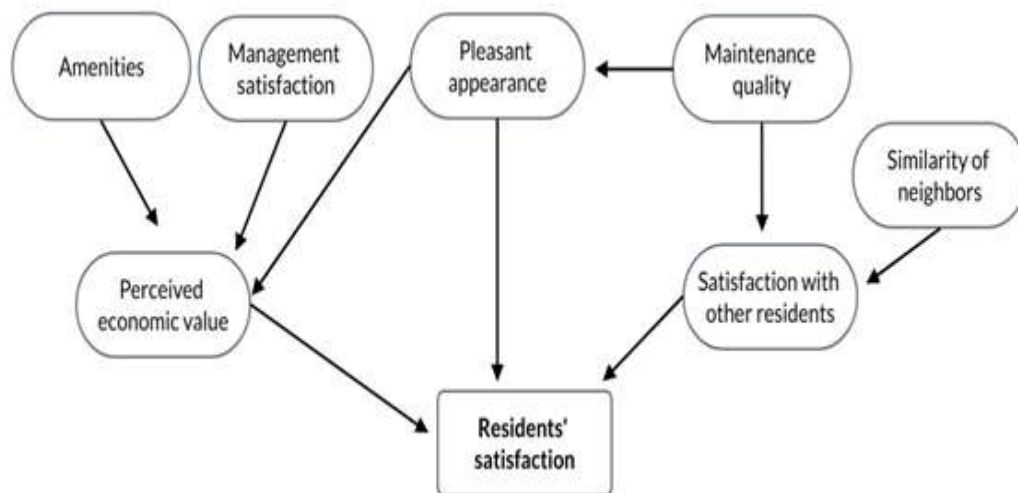
Utilizing path analysis, the model identifies three key direct influences on residential satisfaction:

- Satisfaction with other residents: This factor highlights the importance of social interactions and a sense of community within the residential environment.
- Pleasant appearance: This dimension emphasizes the role of aesthetics and the overall visual appeal of the housing development in shaping resident satisfaction.
- Perceived economic value: Residents' perception of the value they receive for the cost of their dwelling is a significant driver of satisfaction.

Each of these three direct influences is further influenced by a network of indirect factors. For example, satisfaction with other residents may be influenced by the sociodemographic similarity of neighbors. Similarly, perceived economic value might be linked to factors like amenities offered and the quality of maintenance.

This model, applied to a sample of 37 publicly assisted multifamily housing developments in the USA, underscores the complexity of cause-and-effect relationships within residential environments. It offers valuable insights for improving the performance of housing developments by suggesting targeted strategies that address these key factors. While acknowledging the potential for individual variations in resident perceptions, the model provides a robust and empirically tested framework for understanding and ultimately enhancing residential satisfaction within multifamily housing environments.

**Figure 3: Francescato et al.'s (1979) path model of residential satisfaction.**



*Source : Francescato et al.'s (1979)*

### 3.4. Oliver's model of satisfaction (1994)

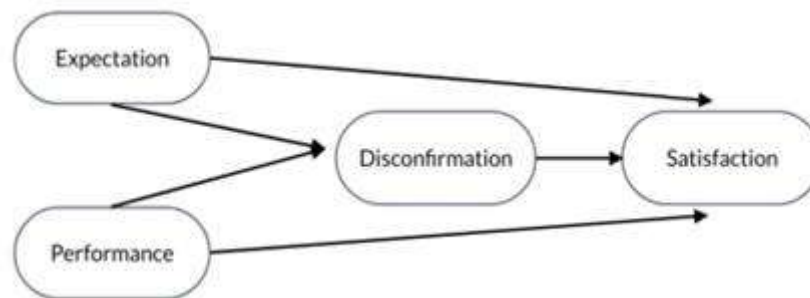
Oliver's EDP model (1994) posits that residential satisfaction is a function of the interplay between performance, expectations, and disconfirmation. Performance refers to the actual attributes and outcomes experienced by residents within their living environment. Expectations represent residents' anticipations regarding the performance of their dwelling and its surroundings. Disconfirmation emerges as the discrepancy between perceived performance and prior expectations.

The model proposes that both performance and expectations can exert direct or indirect influences on residential satisfaction. Positive disconfirmation, where performance exceeds expectations, is associated with increased satisfaction, while negative disconfirmation, where performance falls short of expectations, leads to decreased satisfaction. Crucially, when performance aligns with expectations, satisfaction remains relatively unchanged.

By focusing on the dynamic interplay between these elements, Oliver's model underscores the psychological processes underlying residential satisfaction. It suggests that satisfaction is not merely a static outcome but rather a product of ongoing evaluations and comparisons between desired and actual experiences. Furthermore, the model implies that residents may employ various coping mechanisms, such as adjusting their expectations or seeking alternative housing, to mitigate dissatisfaction arising from negative disconfirmation.

This framework highlights the importance of understanding both objective environmental factors and residents' subjective perceptions in shaping residential satisfaction. By elucidating the complex relationship between performance, expectations, and disconfirmation, Oliver's EDP model offers valuable insights for researchers and practitioners seeking to enhance residential experiences.

*Figure 4: Oliver's model of satisfaction.*



*Source : Oliver (1994)*

### 3.5. Amole's model (2009)

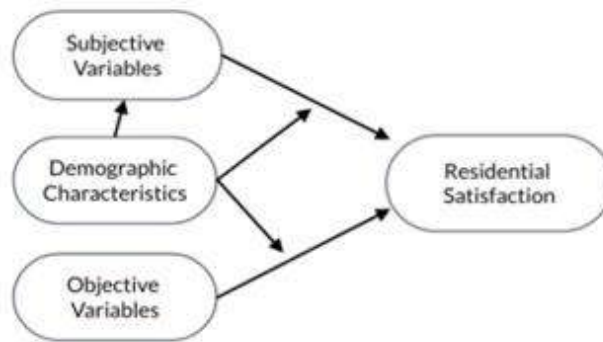
Amole's model (2009) posits residential satisfaction as a function of both objective and subjective factors, incorporating demographic characteristics as potential mediators. The model distinguishes between objective variables, representing the measurable physical attributes of the residential environment, and subjective variables encapsulating residents' perceptions of these attributes. These variables collectively influence residential satisfaction, which is conceptualized as the dependent variable.

Drawing inspiration from Francescato et al. (1979), Amole's model highlights the complex interplay between these factors, emphasizing the role of both direct and indirect relationships. The model underscores the importance of individual differences, acknowledging that demographic characteristics can moderate the impact of objective and subjective variables on residential satisfaction.

Significantly, Amole's model was empirically tested using data from student housing in Nigeria, allowing for the examination of how the physical form and structure of residence halls influence resident satisfaction. This application demonstrates the model's practical utility in assessing the impact of built environment characteristics on resident well-being.

By considering the interplay between objective and subjective factors, as well as the role of demographic characteristics, Amole's model offers a comprehensive framework for understanding residential satisfaction within the specific context of student housing. This model contributes to the broader body of research on residential satisfaction by providing a structured approach to investigating the determinants of resident well-being in diverse housing environments.

**Figure 5: Amole's model of residential satisfaction.**



*Source: Amole's model (2009)*

### 3.6. Speare's model (1974)

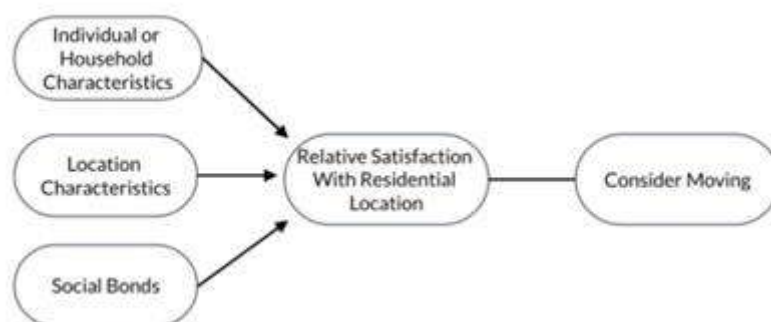
Speare's residential mobility model (1974), rooted in the "stress threshold model," presents a foundational framework for understanding the relationship between residential satisfaction and the decision to relocate. Central to this model is the concept of residential satisfaction as a moderating variable that influences the propensity to move. While dissatisfaction often serves as a catalyst for residential mobility, it is essential to recognize that other life events, such as job transfers, marital disruptions, or household changes, can also initiate the housing search process.

The model posits that dissatisfaction can emerge from alterations in household needs or changes in the local social and physical environment. However, it is crucial to note that such dissatisfaction does not inevitably lead to residential mobility. Individuals may choose to adapt to these changes through various coping strategies, such as modifying their lifestyles or adjusting their expectations. Only when the level of dissatisfaction surpasses a certain threshold does the decision to move become a viable option.

Furthermore, Speare's model highlights the role of individual and household characteristics, as well as location-specific attributes, in the residential mobility decision-making process. These factors interact in complex ways to influence an individual's propensity to relocate. By comparing their current residential situation to their desired living conditions, individuals evaluate their level of satisfaction and determine whether the costs associated with moving outweigh the potential benefits of a new location.

In essence, Speare's model offers a valuable framework for understanding the factors that drive residential mobility. By emphasizing the role of residential satisfaction as a moderating variable and acknowledging the influence of individual and contextual factors, the model provides a foundation for further research into the complex dynamics of residential choice.

**Figure 6: Speare's model (1974).**



*Source: Speare (1974).*

### 3.7. Amérigo and Aragonés's model (1990)

Amérigo and Aragonés's interactional model (1990) posits residential satisfaction as a multifaceted construct influenced by a complex interplay of objective environmental attributes, individual characteristics, and subjective evaluations. This model diverges from simplistic cause-and-effect relationships, emphasizing instead the dynamic interplay between these factors.

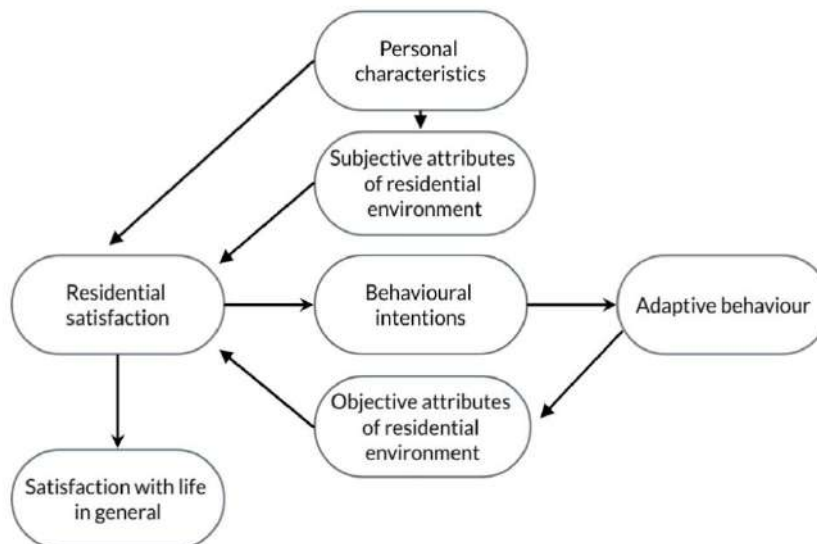
Central to the model is the notion that objective environmental attributes, such as housing quality, neighborhood amenities, and accessibility, contribute to residential satisfaction in three distinct ways: directly, through the lens of individual characteristics, and indirectly by shaping subjective perceptions. This intricate relationship underscores the importance of considering both objective and subjective dimensions when assessing resident well-being.

Moreover, the model acknowledges that residential satisfaction is not merely a response to environmental stimuli but is also influenced by cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes. These internal factors mediate the relationship between objective attributes and overall satisfaction, highlighting the complexity of human experience within the residential environment.

Developed through a study of over 1,000 council housing residents in Madrid, the model emphasizes the significance of individual differences in shaping residential satisfaction. By recognizing the heterogeneity of resident experiences, the model provides a nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to positive or negative residential outcomes.

Ultimately, Amérigo's model positions residential satisfaction as a precursor to overall life satisfaction, emphasizing its role as a critical component of human well-being. Through its focus on the interplay between objective and subjective factors, the model offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex determinants of resident satisfaction and informs strategies for enhancing the quality of residential environments.

*Figure 7: Amérigo and Aragonés's model of residential satisfaction.*



*Source: Amérigo and Aragonés's Model (1990).*

### 3.8. Marans and Spreckelmeyer's model (1981)

Marans and Spreckelmeyer (1981) present a compelling conceptual model that emphasizes the role of perceived environmental quality in shaping resident satisfaction and behavior. Their model posits that an individual's satisfaction with their residential environment is ultimately

determined by their evaluation of various environmental characteristics. Here, satisfaction acts as the dependent variable, influenced by a combination of factors.

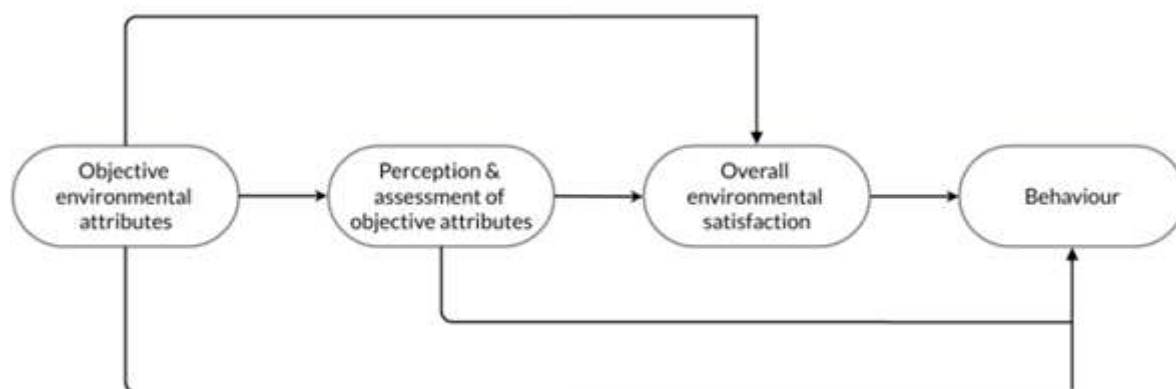
Central to the model is the concept of objective environmental attributes. These represent the measurable characteristics of the physical environment, such as housing quality, access to amenities, or noise levels. However, the model emphasizes that it is not the objective qualities themselves that directly influence satisfaction, but rather residents' subjective responses to these attributes. Through their perceptions and assessments, residents make judgments about the quality of their environment.

Marans and Spreckelmeyer's model highlight the complex interplay between these factors. It illustrates both direct and indirect relationships:

- Direct Effects: Residents' subjective evaluations directly influence their overall environmental satisfaction.
- Indirect Effects: Objective environmental attributes indirectly impact satisfaction by influencing residents' subjective responses.

The model's applicability is demonstrated through its use in analyzing data collected as part of a study evaluating the Ann Arbor Federal building in Michigan, USA (Marans, 1981). Importantly, the model acknowledges the dual role of satisfaction: it can function both as a measure for assessing residential environmental quality and as a predictor of future resident behavior (Stedman, 2002). A key strength of Marans and Spreckelmeyer's model lies in its ability to directly depict causal linkages between different components, making it a valuable tool for understanding cause-and-effect relationships within residential environments.

**Figure 8: Marans and Spreckelmeyer's conceptual model of residential satisfaction.**



*Source: Marans and Spreckelmeyer (1981)*

### 3.9. Gärling and Friman's model (2002)

Gärling and Friman (2002) posit that residential mobility is a multi-stage decision-making process influenced by a several factors. Central to the model is the notion that the decision to relocate is preceded by a series of choices regarding housing search and evaluation.

Sociodemographic characteristics, such as family life cycle stage, play a pivotal role in initiating the decision-making process. These factors can influence the initial motivation to move. Once the decision to relocate is made, individuals embark on a housing search process involving decisions about where and when to search, as well as when to terminate the search. The evaluation of potential housing options is a critical stage, as it guides the ultimate decision to accept or reject a particular residence.

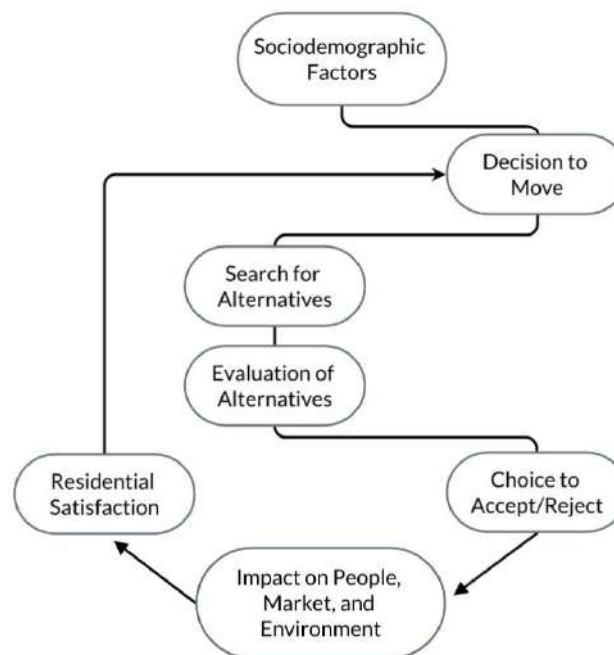
Residential satisfaction emerges as a moderating variable within this decision-making framework. A high level of satisfaction is likely to deter individuals from initiating the moving process, while dissatisfaction can serve as a catalyst for residential mobility. However, it is

essential to note that the model primarily focuses on the decision-making process leading to residential mobility rather than providing a comprehensive explanation of the determinants of residential satisfaction itself.

This model contributes to the understanding of residential mobility by emphasizing the sequential nature of decisions made by individuals and households. By highlighting the role of sociodemographic factors and the housing search process, Gärling and Friman's model offers valuable insights into the factors influencing residential choices.

While the model primarily focuses on the social-geographical context of residential mobility, it provides a foundation for further research into the complex interplay between residential satisfaction, housing search behavior, and the decision to relocate.

**Figure 9: Gärling and Friman's model of residential satisfaction.**



*Source: Gärling and Friman's model (2002)*

### 3.10. Belkadi's model of residents' satisfaction in Casablanca (2017)

Belkadi (2017) presents a comprehensive model aimed at understanding and measuring resident satisfaction within the specific context of Casablanca. The study's primary objective was to develop a robust instrument for assessing resident satisfaction and to explore its relationship with key determinants such as service quality, trust in local authorities, and residential mobility intentions.

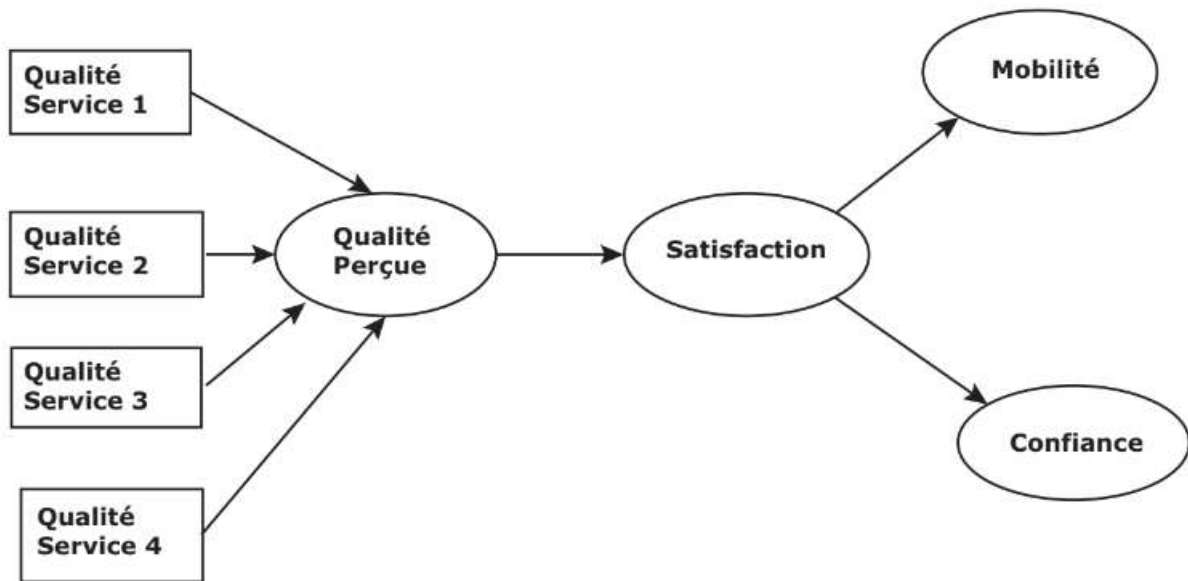
Drawing upon the theoretical framework of consumer satisfaction, Belkadi conducted a survey of 294 Casablanca residents to identify the core factors influencing their satisfaction levels. The resulting model posits that the quality of municipal services plays a pivotal role in shaping resident satisfaction, which in turn, influences trust in local authorities. Furthermore, the study demonstrates a correlation between resident satisfaction and the intention to remain in Casablanca, suggesting that a high level of satisfaction is associated with a greater likelihood of residential stability.

To operationalize the model, Belkadi adapted the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) framework, initially designed for the economic sector, to measure resident satisfaction with public services. This adaptation aligns with Ryzin et al. (2004) who applied the ACSI to

assess satisfaction with public services in New York City. By employing this framework, Belkadi highlights the importance of service quality in fostering resident satisfaction and building trust in local governance.

The study's findings underscore the significance of resident satisfaction as a key indicator of urban performance and a crucial factor influencing residents' decisions to stay or leave a city. The model provides a valuable tool for policymakers and urban planners to assess the impact of public service delivery on resident well-being and to develop targeted strategies for enhancing quality of life in Casablanca. While the study offers significant contributions to the field, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations, particularly the focus on a single city and the potential for cultural and contextual variations in resident satisfaction determinants. Future research could benefit from replicating the study in other urban settings to assess the model's generalizability.

**Figure 9: Belkadi's Model of resident satisfaction (Adapted from ACSI model)**



**Source: Belkadi (2017)**

The presented models offer diverse perspectives on the complex phenomenon of residential satisfaction. While each model contributes unique insights, they also exhibit distinct focal points and methodological approaches. Francescato et al. (1979) and Marans and Spreckelmeyer (1981) share a focus on the interplay between objective environmental attributes and residents' subjective perceptions. However, Francescato et al. delve deeper into the role of social interactions and perceived economic value, while Marans and Spreckelmeyer emphasize the broader impact of the environment on resident behavior. Amole's model expands on this by incorporating demographic factors as potential mediators of the relationship between objective and subjective variables. In contrast, Gärling and Friman concentrate on the decision-making process leading to residential mobility, positioning satisfaction as a moderating factor rather than the primary focus. By recognizing the importance of perceived quality, Belkadi's model (2017) highlights the complexity of evaluating urban environments. It suggests that policymakers and urban planners must consider residents' subjective evaluations alongside objective measures to effectively enhance community well-being and resident satisfaction. Finally, Zenker et al.'s (2009) Citizen Satisfaction Index offers a comprehensive framework for assessing resident satisfaction within a city context. While it aligns with the broader concept of residential satisfaction, its emphasis on urban amenities and services distinguishes it from the other models.

Collectively, these models underscore the multifaceted nature of residential satisfaction, highlighting the importance of considering both objective and subjective factors, as well as individual and contextual differences. By integrating elements from these models, researchers can develop a more holistic understanding of the determinants of residential satisfaction and inform the development of policies and interventions aimed at enhancing resident well-being.

#### 4. Determinants of residents' satisfaction with a city brand

Having established a foundation for understanding resident satisfaction through existing models, this paper now focuses on the specific determinants of resident satisfaction with a city brand, particularly in the Moroccan context. The ensuing section will explore the factors influencing residents' perceptions and evaluations of their city as a brand. By identifying these critical determinants, our objective is to develop a comprehensive model that can inform city branding strategies and enhance resident satisfaction.

To effectively enhance resident satisfaction and develop targeted branding strategies, it is essential to identify the core attributes that contribute to a city's brand image. Drawing upon previous research (Insch, 2010; Zenker et al., 2013, 2014; Belkadi, 2015, 2019; Taechungroj, 2016) and considering the specific context of Morocco, this study categorizes city brand attributes into five primary dimensions:

- **Activities:** Encompassing cultural events, recreational opportunities, and entertainment offerings.
- **Economy:** Reflecting the city's economic vitality, employment opportunities, and business climate.
- **Public Services:** Pertaining to the quality and efficiency of public infrastructure, transportation, and essential services.
- **Environment:** Referring to the city's ecological sustainability, green spaces, and overall livability.
- **Socialization:** Capturing the city's social fabric, community engagement, and inclusivity.

This categorization provides a structured framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of city brands and their potential impact on resident satisfaction.

##### 4.1. Activities

The concept of "activities" emerges as a pivotal dimension within the realm of city branding, significantly influencing resident satisfaction. Building upon the foundational work of Anholt (2006), subsequent studies have underscored the importance of this attribute. Martins and Brito (2007) highlight the role of social and cultural activities in shaping city satisfaction, while Zenker et al. (2013) emphasize the broader concept of "urbanity and diversity," encompassing a wide range of activities.

Insch and Sun (2013) provide empirical evidence of the positive impact of diverse activities on resident satisfaction, specifically among university students. Similarly, Daya and Chliya (2014) underscore the importance of cultural activities in shaping public attitudes towards a city's brand. Ganji et al. (2021) further corroborate these findings by demonstrating the significant correlation between the quality of available activities and residents' overall satisfaction with the city. Moreover, Sun et al. (2023) utilized the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique and fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis to explore residents' perspectives on cultural activities. Their results indicated that cultural facilities, activities, and festivals were identified as key factors influencing resident satisfaction.

These studies collectively underscore the critical role of activities in fostering a vibrant and appealing city brand. By offering a diverse range of cultural, recreational, and entertainment options, cities can ultimately drive overall satisfaction.

A nuanced understanding of the relationship between city brand attributes and resident satisfaction necessitates consideration of the unique cultural and socio-economic contexts within which cities operate. In Morocco, the concept of "activities" holds particular significance due to the country's rich cultural heritage and emphasis on social interaction. Although existing studies provide a general framework for understanding the importance of activities in city branding, further research is required to explore the specific manifestations of this attribute in the Moroccan context. Investigating factors such as the role of traditional cultural events, the influence of religious practices, and the impact of urbanization on leisure activities is essential to develop a comprehensive understanding of how activities shape resident satisfaction in Moroccan cities.

We therefore put forward hypothesis:

***Hypothesis 1: The perceived quality of a city's activities has a significant and positive influence on residents' overall satisfaction with the city's brand.***

#### **4.2. Economy**

The economic vitality of a city is another critical dimension influencing resident satisfaction. As posited by Anholt (2006), a city's economic prosperity, encompassing factors such as employment opportunities and overall economic activity, is a key attribute of a strong city brand. This perspective aligns with Zenker's (2013) assertion that residents' satisfaction is influenced by employment-related factors, such as job availability and wage levels. Sigindi (2017) further emphasizes the importance of economic conditions by demonstrating its significant impact on residents' perceptions of a city's brand. This finding is corroborated by Merrilees et al. (2012), who identified economic factors as a key determinant of resident satisfaction alongside urbanity and cultural activities.

A study conducted by Lee et al. (2023) provides valuable insights into the intricate relationship between economic factors and resident satisfaction in Shanghai. While the city has a diverse economy and ample job opportunities, indicating strong overall economic performance, the reality for residents is more complex. There is a noticeable gap between the city's economic strength and the everyday experiences of its people. Issues such as monthly income and cost of living, which are of utmost importance, are major concerns for residents. This emphasis on balancing economic growth with resident well-being was corroborated by Kshetrimayum et al. (2020), who highlighted the necessity of addressing specific economic challenges faced by the population to foster a more sustainable urban future.

Morocco's unique socio-economic trajectory, characterized by rapid urbanization and economic transformation, underscores the critical role of economic factors in shaping urban experiences. Beyond the generic concept of economic prosperity, the Moroccan context necessitates a nuanced understanding of the specific economic drivers shaping resident perceptions. The interplay between traditional economic sectors, such as agriculture and artisanal crafts, and modern industries, including technology and finance, adds complexity to the relationship between economic performance and resident satisfaction. Furthermore, the government's role in economic development, through policies and investments, significantly influences residents' perceptions of their city's economic prospects.

Based on these insights, we propose the following hypothesis:

***Hypothesis 2: The perceived quality of the economic activity significantly and positively influences residents' overall satisfaction with the city brand.***

#### **4.3. Public services**

The importance of public services in shaping resident satisfaction is particularly pronounced in

the Moroccan context (Belkadi, 2015). With the country's rapid urbanization and development efforts, the quality and availability of public services play a crucial role in enhancing the overall appeal and livability of its cities. This transition leads us to a closer examination of public services as a key determinant of city brand perception and resident satisfaction in Morocco.

Public services represent a critical dimension of a city's overall appeal, significantly influencing resident satisfaction. A robust public service infrastructure encompasses a wide range of elements, including healthcare, education, transportation, and public safety.

Public services represent a critical dimension of a city's overall appeal, significantly influencing resident satisfaction. A robust public service infrastructure encompasses a wide range of elements, including healthcare, education, transportation, and public safety.

Research has consistently highlighted the importance of public transport and facilities within this domain (Kozak, 2003, cited in Merrilees et al., 2009). Echtner and Ritchie (2003) further emphasize the broader concept of urban infrastructure as a key attribute of destination branding. Moreover, studies by Insch (2010), Martins and Brito (2007), and Darchen and Tremblay (2010) underscore the significance of safety, quality of education, and public transport in shaping resident satisfaction.

Building on these findings, Tran and Dollery (2021) demonstrated that administrative intensity notably influences resident satisfaction within urban councils. They posited that administrative efficiency and responsiveness are crucial components of overall resident well-being. However, Ochoa-Rico et al. (2023) highlighted a contextual disparity, suggesting that the provision of public services exerts a more pronounced influence on resident satisfaction in metropolitan areas compared to rural regions.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Kshetrimayum et al. (2020) revealed that a majority of residents expressed a moderate degree of satisfaction with their city, primarily attributing this to the accessibility of public services such as transportation and urban infrastructure. The proximity to transportation hubs, including train and bus stations, as well as the city center, not only facilitated increased employment opportunities and affordability but also contributed to an enhanced overall quality of life for residents. In addition, Pimchan and Darawong (2024) found that the strongest predictor of resident satisfaction was the quality of public services.

Based on this evidence, we propose the following hypothesis:

***Hypothesis 3: The perceived quality of public services has a significant and positive impact on residents' overall satisfaction with the city's brand.***

#### **4.4. Environment:**

A robust body of literature unequivocally supports the notion that the perceived quality of the urban environment exerts a significant and positive influence on residents' overall satisfaction with their city. This relationship is predicated on the understanding that residents' subjective evaluations of environmental attributes, such as green spaces, cleanliness, and air quality, directly shape their perceptions of the city as a desirable place to live.

Studies by Merrilees et al. (2012), Zenker et al. (2013), and Abasova (2019) (cited in Merrilees et al., 2009) underscore the role of environmental factors in shaping resident attitudes and satisfaction. Abasova's work specifically demonstrates the impact of cleanliness and the presence of natural surroundings, such as the ocean, on residents' perceptions of a city as a destination. Sigindi (2017) further emphasizes the importance of nature and the environment as core attributes of a city's brand, highlighting their relevance across diverse resident segments. Building upon this foundation, Chan and Marafa (2016) introduce the concept of "green resources" to encapsulate the visible environmental elements within a city, such as parks, green spaces, and trees. Their research, grounded in Anholt's City Brand Hexagon model, underscores the significance of environmental factors in shaping a city's overall brand image.

Urban green spaces are vital for city sustainability and positively correlate with residents' life satisfaction. A study in Ineu, a small, economically developed city in Romania, found that residents highly value urban green spaces, such as parks, riverbanks, and city gardens (Cernicova-Buca et al., 2023).

Moreover, resident satisfaction with the environment is significantly influenced by various environmental factors. These include energy resources, air quality, and infrastructure. Satisfaction levels vary across different demographic groups and geographic locations, highlighting the importance of tailored urban planning and policy measures (Lee et al., 2021; Shen et al., 2023; Son et al., 2023).

The environmental dimension of city branding assumes particular significance within the Moroccan context. Characterized by a diverse topography encompassing both urban and rural landscapes, Morocco faces unique challenges in balancing environmental preservation with urban development. The preservation of natural spaces and the maintenance of cleanliness emerge as critical factors influencing resident satisfaction in Moroccan cities. This delicate equilibrium between urbanization and environmental sustainability necessitates a deeper exploration of how environmental attributes impact resident perceptions and experiences.

In alignment with these findings, we propose the following hypothesis:

***Hypothesis 3: The perceived quality of the city's environment has a significant and positive impact on residents' overall satisfaction with the city's brand.***

#### **4.5. Socialization:**

The concept of socialization encompasses the complex interplay of social interactions, diversity, and community cohesion within a city. It encompasses both the quality and diversity of the city's population as well as the nature of interactions among residents and between residents and outsiders.

Previous research has underscored the multifaceted nature of socialization's impact. Merrilees et al. (2012) emphasize the primacy of social ties, while Zenker et al. (2013) highlight the role of diversity and community spirit. Darchen and Tremblay (2010) further contribute by emphasizing the significance of ethnic and cultural diversity, aligning with Pujol et al.'s (2017) conceptualization of diversity as a symbolic city attribute. Vanolo's (2008) work on creative cities underscores the role of social atmosphere and diversity in shaping urban identity. However, the extensive exploration of socialization's influence on resident satisfaction has primarily occurred within the context of "slow cities" (Chi & Han, 2020), suggesting a potential underrepresentation in mainstream urban research.

Recent investigations have delved deeper into the mechanisms through which socialization impacts resident satisfaction. Social support networks provide emotional sustenance, companionship, and security, fostering a positive emotional connection to a place (Hashemi et al., 2023). Active community engagement cultivates a sense of ownership and attachment, enhancing overall satisfaction (Strandberg, 2023). Moreover, the quality of social interactions, characterized by trust, empathy, and shared experiences, contributes to a welcoming and supportive community atmosphere (Chaulagain et al., 2023). Recognizing the diverse expectations of residents regarding social life is crucial for fostering inclusive communities that cater to varying needs (Chaulagain et al., 2023).

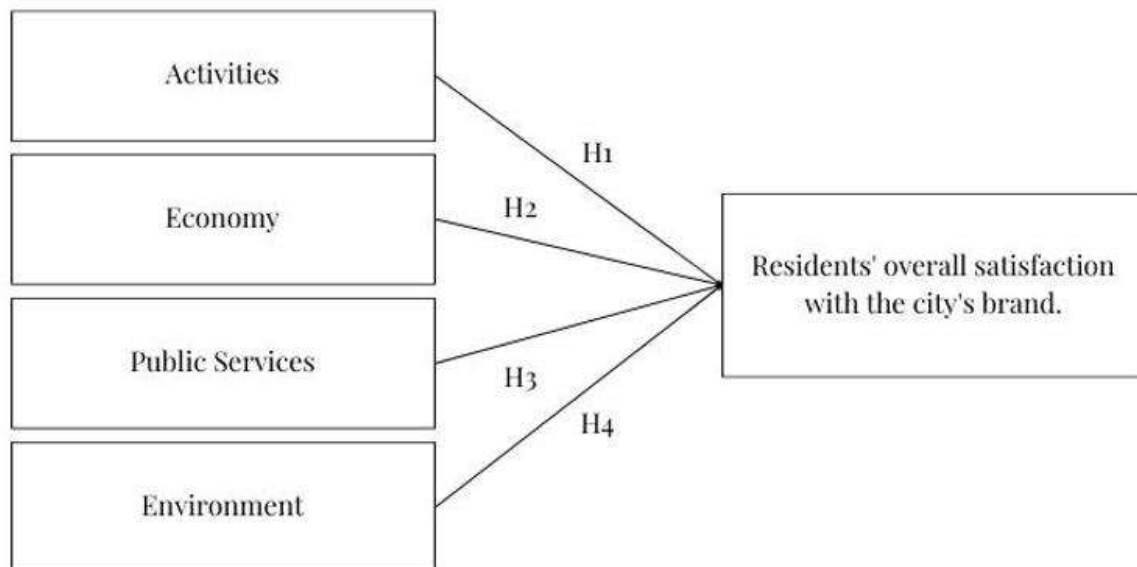
The dimension of socialization takes on particular resonance within the Moroccan context, characterized by a rich tapestry of cultural diversity, strong communal bonds, and a deep-rooted emphasis on social interactions. Moroccan cities are renowned for their vibrant social fabric, where public spaces serve as hubs for community engagement and cultural exchange.

Based on these findings, we hypothesize the following:

***Hypothesis 4: The perceived quality of the city's socialization has a significant and positive impact on residents' overall satisfaction with the city's brand.***

To visually represent the complex interaction between the identified determinants of resident satisfaction, our proposed conceptual model is presented in Figure 10. This model offers a holistic overview of the proposed relationships between city brand attributes and overall residents' satisfaction.

**Figure 10: Determinants of residents' satisfaction with the city's brand (The proposed model)**



**Source: Authors.**

## 5. Conclusion

This paper has explored the complex relationship between city brand attributes and resident satisfaction. By critically reviewing existing models and drawing upon relevant literature, we have identified five key determinants of resident satisfaction within the city branding framework: activities, economy, public services, environment, and socialization. Each of these attributes contributes to residents' overall perceptions and evaluations of their city.

The proposed hypotheses suggest that cities excelling in these dimensions are likely to experience higher levels of resident satisfaction. A robust offering of activities caters to diverse interests and fosters social interaction. A thriving economy provides employment opportunities and enhances quality of life. Well-developed public services ensure accessibility and convenience. A high-quality environment promotes well-being and a sense of place. Finally, strong social networks and a sense of community belonging contribute to a positive resident experience.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Residential satisfaction remains a multifaceted phenomenon, influenced by a multitude of factors beyond those explored here. Further research is necessary to refine our understanding of the complex interactions between these attributes and their impact on resident satisfaction. Additionally, future studies could benefit from incorporating residents' perspectives directly through surveys and focus groups, capturing the subjective nature of resident experience.

This conceptual model provides a valuable foundation for policymakers and urban planners seeking to enhance resident well-being and foster vibrant city environments. By strategically addressing the identified attributes, cities can cultivate a strong brand identity, attract and retain residents, and improve overall quality of life.

Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge the limitations of this conceptual framework. Empirical validation is essential to establish the robustness of the proposed relationships

between city brand attributes and resident satisfaction. Future research should undertake quantitative studies to test these hypotheses rigorously. Additionally, exploring the relative importance of these attributes across different city contexts and cultural settings would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

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