

Urban Development from the Perspective of the Narrative Approach

An Analysis of the Nature, Role, and Narrative Position of Urban Documents*

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ABSTRACT

Cities are crossroads of narratives, while all narratives would not necessarily similarly influence the places, activities, life, and destiny of a city. Some narratives are dominant, and others are marginal, latent, and suppressed. Theoretical literature and practical experiences of urban development confirm that no narrative can affect the development of cities as much as specialized documents of urban development. Urban development documents are not just technical texts but are considered a kind of "narrative" benefiting from all narrative possibilities for persuading the audience and pushing their ideas. The main questions are as follows: How important is the assessment of narrative qualities of urban development document? How is it done? What would be the outcomes? This study aims to analyze the urban development documents based on the narrative aspect to find the rhetorical-narrative functions of these documents and achieve a new understanding of the urban planner's role as a narrator and the document's position as the narration. The extant study reviews theoretical texts related to narrative and urban development scopes using qualitative analysis of content to formulate a conceptual framework for identifying components and themes of the narration and tracking and analyzing them within professional urban development documents through synthesis of these texts. Rereading urban development documents through the lens of narrative indicates how urban realities are framed and interpreted with a certain technique in these documents so one can illustrate a special and inclusive version of a desirable future in this way. Consideration of urban development based on the narrative approach and rereading urban documents through the narrative lens would necessitate a revision in the theoretical and operational goals of urban development knowledge and factors legitimizing it. The role and position of city, urban planner, and urban development will be redefined in the light of a novel knowledge base.

Keywords: Narrative, Urban development Documents, Narrative Turn, Urban Storytelling, Narrative Quality of Urban Development Documents.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Places are the crossroads of narratives. Every single place can be taken into account as the physical embodiment of one or a set of narratives. If the area of a place is as size as a house, the form and structure, decorations and arrangement, activity and life in that place will reflect the dreams, imaginations, and demands of a small community, which has been involved in the design of, construction of, and then life in it. When the place's area is extended to the city and its urban streets and spaces, we will face a more collective, plural, multifaceted, and sometimes more conflicted crossroad. It should be asked which community, which group of people, and what kinds of values and interests have established the physical and social reality of the city. From another point of view, this question asks what narratives have formed the city and its material and nonmaterial belongings. Whether formal and dominant narratives of governors, managers, and decision-makers have shaped the city or micro and informal narrations by people have also played a role in this process. In this lieu, where does the narrative of urban planners and designers stand, and how much they are important, necessary, and binding?

Because these are narratives that form the physical reality of places consciously or unconsciously, implicitly or explicitly, clearly or latently, and in top-down or bottom-up form, it is highly important to identify narratives and their mechanisms, occurrence, and action methods in the theory and practice of urban development¹. Among a wide range of narratives affecting the city, its body, and its activities, a consensus asserts that narratives cited in professional documents of urban design and planning provide the highest chance, possibility, and power for shaping cities. In other words, among all potential narratives influencing the city, official documents of urban development have the upper hand, and they are more likely realized than other forms of narrative. An urban development document is not just a technical document dealing with engineering and management knowledge but is far beyond; it is a narrative and can employ all narrative measures to persuade its audiences and push its idea. Hence, narrative analysis of documents is not only an emotional-literary action, but also an essential and research-based action to reveal the overt and covert layers, ideologic goals and objectives, conflicts and distortions, promises and failures, explicit and implicit concepts, and show what, why, and how are the issues considered in the document. Over two and three decades, at the same time as a narrative turn in many knowledge realms, urban development theorists have paid attention to narrative aspects of urban development documents and the influence of these narratives on the direction and form of urban development.

Many attempts have been made to determine the ratio

between narrative and professional documents of urban planning and design. The main question is as follows: If official documents of urban development have narrative attributes providing an extent of narrativity as mentioned above, how and through what lens can one detect these attributes and extents? In other words, how one can reveal the rhetorical-narrative functions of urban development documents and read or interpret the document's text like a narrative based on a purposeful narrative-oriented reading. Furthermore, some urban development theorists assume that urban documents are mainly narratives due to their missions, goals, processes, and internal structures, even though they are not aware of their narrativity. Therefore, the relationship between urban development documents and narrative is not just a latter case about text reading and interpretation. It is beyond this case and can guide the attitude and writing or document's text with a priori form.

Reading and writing urban development documents from the narrative perspective can disclose valuable facts: various viewpoints, numerous players, multiple and sometimes contradictory motivations, values and interests, main and secondary plots, causes and effects, critical points, time lags, place and activity changes, and evolutions. Narrative language is the language of negotiation and agreement. Hence, efforts taken to make closeness and reconciliation between the formal language of the document and the human language of the narrative make the urban projects and designs more legible and tangible for their true audiences, who are often the people influenced by the document's plans and recommendations. Since the specialized documents of urban development have been less investigated in terms of narrative, this paper aims to study these documents as a narrative to answer a key question: How does one examine and analyze the urban development documents in terms of their narrative qualities? Relying on the previous studies about urban development knowledge and referring to the literature realm- narrative in particular- and rereading and interpreting the narrative theorists' ideas, this study tries to formulate a guide conceptual framework for narrative reading of urban development documents and investigating their current narrative qualities.

2. METHOD

The extant study has reviewed and analyzed theoretical texts related to narrative and urban development fields by using Qualitative Analysis of Content. The main purpose of this study is to formulate a conceptual framework for identifying components and themes of narrative and tracking and analyzing them in specialized urban development documents. Since theoretical literature of urban development major in particular and urban studies, in general, have been occupied with the relationship

between narrative, city, and urban development and analyzed this relation through various methods over two and three decades, a part of this study would identify, read, and interpret the theoretical literature of this major. Despite the richness and value of these studies, there are some shortcomings and gaps in the link between the two realms of narrative and urban development, making it impossible to enact a more or less comprehensive and inclusive conceptual framework. One reason for this limitation is rooted in the point that most conducted studies just consider the minimum functions of narrative and its preliminary definitions and pay less attention to the wider and richer realms that narrative studies provide. For this purpose and to take a small step forward, the present study has directly reviewed the comments of literary theorists and those narrators who are less cited in theoretical literature of urban development like David Herman, Marie Laure Ryan, H. Porter Abbott, and Bronwen Thomas. To investigate and read professional urban development documents in terms of their narrative qualities, a guiding and supportive conceptual framework is required that can introduce key concepts and components in reading documents and detect their relationships. The formulation of such a framework is not possible without referring to the narration theory and narrative studies, and is obtained only through an interdisciplinary and payoff study; payoff between urban development and narrative. This conceptual framework can again make us familiar with urban development documents and the narratives they quote, and beyond that, reveal the gap or even conflicts existing in the narratives and their relationships with the narrative of urban space users. Ultimately, this framework can disclose the reasons for the success or failure of these narratives, paving the future way for preparing urban development documents. By referring to theoretical

literature of urban development on the one hand and narrative studies on the other hand and qualitative analysis of their contents, this study tries to make a significant link between these two fields and reveal this connection and its details by formulating a conceptual framework to examine narrative qualities of urban development documents.

3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

3.1. Narrative: What is Narrative, and What are Its Borders?

In preliminary and more or less agreed definition by narrative scholars, the narrative is defined as the “representation of an event or a series of events” (Abbott 2002, 12). Most theorists indeed define narrative based on a chain of events and cause-effect relationships between them (Thomas 2016, 2). Edward Branigan (1992) defines narrative a way of organizing spatial and temporal data into a cause-effect chain of events with a beginning, middle and end that embodies a judgment about the nature of events, indicating how can be aware of event and quote them in this way. “Narrative introduces a chain of events occurred in a time and place” (Lotte 2000). However, actions and events are not actualized without characters (Buckland 2021). Characters are human-like agents and entities that participate in events. We indeed will not have any event without their presence; events are nothing but the actions and reactions of characters (Abbott 2002, 17). Regarding the characteristics mentioned above, Marie Laure Ryan (2004) has classified the narrativity terms and requirements into four dimensions: three semantic dimensions and one formal and pragmatic dimension (Table 1).

Table 1. Four Dimensions of Narrativity

Spatial Dimension	The narrative must be about a world populated by individuated existents.
Temporal Dimension	- This world must be situated in time and undergo significant transformations. - These transformations must be caused by non-repetitive physical events.
Mental Dimension	- Some of the participants in the events must be intelligent agents who have a mental life and react emotionally to the states of the world. - Some of the events must be purposeful actions by these agents.
Formal and Pragmatic Dimensions	- The sequence of events must form a unified causal chain and lead to closure. - The occurrence of at least some of the events must be asserted as fact for the story world. - The story must communicate something meaningful to the audience.

(Derived from Ryan 2004)

The components mentioned above determine the severity and rate of narrativity of a narrative text on the one hand and confirm what cannot be considered as narrative or, in other words, what cases provide less narrativity on the other hand. For instance,

description, explanation, analysis, classification, or comparison cannot be considered narrative because they are statistics and do not move through time, and there is no more important reason. They do not have a storyline line and no event or action may exist in

them. Instructions, recommendations, hypotheses, petitions, lawsuits, menus, and lists are not narrative texts. Each list consists of irrelevant events such as chronologies or diaries free of full narrativity terms. Troubleshooting and problem-solving reports will not have any extent of narrativity if they always ignore narrativity dimensions. According to the classification mentioned above, even those scenarios empty of human experience do not take into account a complete and perfect narrative- scenarios related to natural forces or cosmic events, for instance. A text will not be fully narrative when there is any footprint of intelligent human-like agent in the scenarios or entities involved in it are just abstract- social class, human race, logic, capitalism, government, artificial intelligence, etc.- and when their concrete reflection is not found in the work. The narrative is linked to human experience and concrete events; therefore, any representation that is just related to subjectivities and abstracts (like an interior monologue) consists of less narrativity (Abbott 2002; Branigan 1992; Herman 2007; Herman 2009; Ryan 2004). Thus, different kinds of texts can be divided into four categories within a schematic classification: narrative fiction texts (such as novels, short stories and play), narrative non-fiction texts (like history, narrative essays, reminiscence, and biography), non-narrative fiction texts (e.g., different types of poems), and non-narrative non-fiction texts (such as academic papers and studies) (Branigan 1992), which urban development documents are in the category of narrative non-fiction texts. However, there is not an absolute border between these types, and even those texts considered “non-narrative” based on the definition and classification provide an extent of narrativity. Moreover, this point should not be forgotten that despite the opinion of theorists, narrativity is not an inherent quality of texts to be confirmed or rejected by referring to a fixed toolkit, but it introduces an activity done by the reader to examine a text in terms of its narrativity or non-narrativity. In other words, narrativity is more a kind of strategy in reading texts rather than a subject related to the formal quality of a text (Thomas 2016, 3). Narrativity and storytelling are intrinsic talents, so it is not weird that people and readers of any text are willing to read or memory that text as a narrative. As Peter Brooks (1985) says, “Our definition of who we are is tied to the stories we tell about our lives and the world we live in.” Therefore, the narrative is not specific to art or literature but is involved in any cultural utterance that has surrounded us. Narrative plays a fundamental role in the patterns created by our experiences and our insights about life (Abbott 2002; Lotte 2000). The narrative clarifies the reality around us and gives it a fictional and sequential form so that the beginning, middle, and end of it are clear. By organizing the turmoil of events, making reality coherent, and making affairs meaningful (past, present, and future), narratives gave reveling,

informing, and even therapeutic traits (Eckstein 2003; Rozario 2005). People highly need to stabilize and use narrative patterns to see life as a story beyond anything else; a story with a timeline that starts with birth and ends with death, and each stage in this process has a specific meaning and justification. Narrative helps humans to identify themselves as active entities in the context of time (Bathes 1966).

Many times, particularly in general texts, however, narrative and story are considered simultaneously and are often used instead of each other, but there is a subtle and significant difference between these two concepts, a difference that completely appears when we go through urban development documents. Understanding this distinction required considering a third notion called “Narrative Discourse.” In simple and brief words, the narrative consists of story and narrative discourse. The difference between story and narrative discourse can be simply detected through the distinction between “what is told?” (story) and “how is it told?” (narrative discourse). The story includes events and characters, while narrative discourse is about the representation of events or storytelling methods. This distinction allows us to see how we can tell a single story in different ways, with different words, different feelings and emotions, different comments, and or different details. This is where the concept of “narrator” comes into the scene; different narrators tell the same story in different ways (Abbott 2002; Herman 2009; Thomas 2016). Therefore, narrative depends on the context, speaker (narrator), story’s audience (narrative listener), and method of storytelling (Ameel 2021).

3.2. Narrative and Urban Development Knowledge

As mentioned from the viewpoint of narrative theory, urban development documents provide narrativity features and requirements. However, thinking of formal documents as a narrative has been common recently. Over the past two or three decades, the “narrative turn” in social and humanistic sciences has paved the way for the narrative turn in other knowledge realms, such as law, politics, natural sciences, medical sciences, art, and so forth (Herman and Ryan 2010). Urban development knowledge has been also involved in this process, especially in recent two decades with increasing interest in the language and storytelling in the theory and practice of urban development; this case has been such as serious and bold case that some theorists and researchers have talked about narrative or fictional turn in urban development (Ameel 2016; Sandercock 2010; Vanhulst 2012). Attention to language and storytelling in urban development theory has become an epidemic case over recent years, so a rich literature with storytelling topics has appeared that considers narrative as a fundamental matter in urban development theory (Vale and Campanella 2005). Nevertheless, this narrative turn-

which is still shaping- has not yet become a paradigm with precise limits and boundaries and has embodied some approaches with more or less relevance to urban development, most of which deal with relatively different aspects of the cities and their planning (Ameel 2021).

From a historical viewpoint, the mentioned evolution is rooted in a knowledge that occurred in the past half-century about the city and its understanding; in this case, city planning and knowledge throughout the positivism theories and methods adopted from the natural sciences have been replaced with city planning and knowledge through humanistic theories and methods derived from social sciences (Albrecht 1986; Legates 1998; Birch 2011). The paradigm of holistic rational planning under the question and maturity of more communicational and interactive approaches in urban development knowledge that occurred under the shadow of the participation revolution are significant samples of this attitude change. Therefore, a more multidimensional and pluralistic understanding of the city was achieved. In a famous quote, Leonie Sandercock calls this new understanding the “Epistemology of Multiplicity” (Sandercock 1998, 163-164). New approaches and methods have appeared in urban design and planning under the light of this novel epistemology, which is not restricted only to natural sciences and their common methodologies (Eizenberg and Shilon 2016; Gaber 1993; Kaplan 2002). The advent of multiple and plural cities in today’s world reminds the necessity of revising urban development goals and their legitimization more than any time. Some approaches, such as postmodern planning, neo-pragmatism, political economics of space, and the most inclusive and wide case of collaborative planning, all comprise conditional and scheduled responses to the urban development goals and their legitimizing components (Allmendinger 2002; Allmendinger and Tweder-Jones 2002). In this lieu, reference to the narrative theory and storytelling requirements was another new possibility for the urban development theory and practice, which has been considered, expanded, evolved, and realized at a significant scale.

According to a review and schematic investigation of theoretical texts of urban development, it can be stated that two general orientations rule over the relationship between narrative, narrativity, and urban development knowledge; the orientations, in which James Throgmorton and Leonie Sandercock are their representatives.

James Throgmorton (1992) was among the first researchers who introduced a narrative understanding of urban development knowledge. Citing narrative theory, he defines urban planning as a kind of actualizable and future-centered narrative in which individuals involved in it are simultaneously characters of the narrative and one of its authors. He defines urban planning as a form of persuasive

storytelling and writes, “Urban developers can be considered as authors who are writing texts made of map, design, analysis, and article. These texts reflect the knowledge raised from different or conflicting insights, and are read or interpreted within diverse and sometimes contradictory methods” (Throgmorton 1992, 19). Throgmorton defines planning as a narrative and considers urban developer a narrator/author, explaining that a project with richness power can be successful and accepted. Accordingly, he believes that the criteria for evaluating urban planning are similar to the criteria for understanding and examining narrative. Throgmorton has followed and developed the idea of urban development as a narrative throughout three decades and within his work and research activities, and he tried in one of his papers to answer some criticisms from theorists and researchers (Throgmorton 2003). In another paper, he played the role of a first-person narrator and investigated this idea concerning his life and research career, and his hometown, Louisville (Throgmorton 2007).

The name of Leonie Sandercock must be pointed in line with the narrative definition of urban development by Throgmorton, while Sandercock’s trajectory is different. He highlights the specific importance of story in urban development and believes that story and storytelling are implemented in different ways within urban development; as a tool for facilitating the urban planning process or improving local participation procedures or as a possibility for mediation, negotiation, and settlement of conflicts, and as a catalyzer for change or a solution for finding the foundation, origin, and identity of cities and nation or a tool for policymaking or a method for criticizing and explaining urban policies and measures, and or an effective and inspiring potential for teaching urban development and training urban developers (Sandercock 2003).

We see a subtle difference between the views of Sandercock and Throgmorton about the narrative-urban development link. In the opinion of Throgmorton, the operation method of urban planning is much like telling a story. Storytelling is the base and foundation of urban planning. Each urban development document and each urban project tell a story or a set of stories. It means that in each document or project, urban developers (or urban development officials) can be considered as narrator(s) that tell a story for residents of a zone who are influenced by urban development plans; the residents, in turn, play their roles as listeners. Most of the quoted events are almost real (not imaginative), but urban development documents also involve hypothetical elements, and some claims about the future image of the area, for instance. In addition to the urban developers’ narrative about a certain zone, there are diverse and wider narratives generated by others: by residents (written or spoken), or more generally by stakeholders,

or narratives published in the press or narratives produced by politicians, or narratives written in the suggested letters or documents, or narratives sent via social networks (Ameel 2021). Therefore, every specialized or general document about the urban

environment, at any scale, is a narrative or, more precisely, can be considered as a narrative because it has an extent of narrativity and four dimensions of the narrative- as mentioned before- can be detected in any document (Table 2).

Table 2. Four Dimensions of Narrativity in Urban Development Document

Spatial Dimension	The document is about an environment composed of individuated and identifiable residents and users.
Temporal Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This environment is situated within time, has a (passed) past and an imagined future, and its present has been significantly transformed. - These transformations have occurred due to external physical-functional interventions or internal transformational evolutions.
Mental Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residents and users of the environment are active agents that play a role in life and current events in the environment, are intelligent, have a mental life, and emotionally respond to environmental conditions. - The life existing in the environment consists of purposeful actions of the agents on the one hand and larger events on the other hand, which occur out of the decision and control of the internal agents of the environment or are applied to it from the outside.
Formal and Pragmatic Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The chain of these events and actions constructs an integrated causal sequence; it goes through time and finally leads to closure. - Some events are real; they have either occurred or are going to occur, while the occurrence of some others is considered as a probability in the future. - A document is prepared to convey a significant and purposeful point to the audience.

In the opinion of Throgmorton (2003), based on the explanations mentioned above, there is no difference between urban planning and narrativity, and both are inherently linked from the beginning. Urban developers try to control streams shaping the city's future as much as they can through their stories. Their stories adopt a certain approach to the current status through language to create an image of the future. From this viewpoint, urban development documents are the best and most precise evidence for reading these stories, and the orientations and implicit-explicit goals of urban developers, politicians, and policymakers at a higher level. By describing and evolving the research trajectory of Throgmorton, Lieven Ameel later tried to scrutinize the concept of "urban development as narrative" in a series of sequential and connected studies and discuss the urban development documents related to Helsinki, Finland regarding the narrative term (Ameel 2015; Ameel 2016; Ameel 2021). Throgmorton's emphasis on urban development documents and stories of urban developers can be searched in the research works by John Forester (1999, 2002).

If storytelling is the planning base for some urban developers such as Throgmorton, Ameel, and somehow Forester who consider the urban documents a narrative on their own, Sandercock sees storytelling as a tool for knowledge and action of urban development; a tool that helps urban development to be more inclusive, democratic, and humane either as a branch of knowledge or in practice (Sandercock 2003). In other words, unlike Throgmorton, Sandercock does not consider urban development a

kind of narrative and urban planning process a kind of storytelling that can contribute to the improvement of the urban development process and product. In his opinion, storytelling is not the urban planning base but is a tool for its better and more humane realization. Merlijn Vanhulst uses the terms "a model of" and "a model for" to distinguish the understanding and practice of Throgmorton from Sandercock, inspired by the late anthropologist Clifford Geertz (Vanhulst 2012, 302-303). In his opinion, Throgmorton and Sandercock introduce two different approaches towards narrative and its application in urban development. For Throgmorton, storytelling is a model of urban development that appeared in the late 1980s and developed throughout the 1990s. And became popular as an efficient model in the 21st century and was used in different contexts. According to this viewpoint, urban development documents play a key role in narrativity and must be written and read following it. The popularity of some terms, such as "narrative urban development" and "storyteller urban design and planning," are the outcomes of his efforts and other researchers who have taken steps in this process. For Sandercock, however, storytelling is a model for urban development, which can be used for urban design, planning, and management, even if urban structures, frameworks, institutes, and procedures do not allow the partial realization of a full narrative urban development. Good storytelling can result in better planning. Therefore, consideration of storytelling as an effective tool can improve the performance of urban development knowledge and action.

Therefore, there are two main branches for illustrating the conceptual framework of this study regarding the review and assessment of theoretical texts of urban development and narrative done so far. The first branch focuses on the viewpoint of Sandercock and the use of narrativity in revising the attitude towards documents, making them more participatory (a model for ...), and the second branch considers Throgmorton's idea, with more focus on the form and content of documents that considers documents as narrative texts (a model of ...). Because this study aims to identify narrative qualities of urban documents to improve urban development theory and practice, its main focus is on the theoretical tradition known by Throgmorton and deals with analyzing the document as a narrative text. Therefore, this study tries to identify and explain components affecting the narrative quality of urban documents by analyzing and interpreting theoretical text. It also tends to present a novel conceptual framework for analyzing and reading the content of urban documents in terms of narrative.

3.3. Urban Development Document as Narrative

According to the points mentioned in previous sections, one can consider the urban development document a narrative quoted to possible individuals influenced by the recommended programs and measures by one or more narrators. As seen in the previous section, this document comprises four dimensions of narrative, including spatial dimension, temporal dimension, mental dimension, and formal and pragmatic dimension. This document is defined within a certain context and period and contains events and evolutions that have created major changes in this context and time. This document thinks of those ideas and actions that cannot be realized without human agents' interference and finally follows a goal and destination, trying to examine and test the terms for reaching the considered goal by illustrating a causal and chain-shaped trajectory. With all this, however, an urban design or urban development document must not and cannot be considered a perfect narrative. For instance, if we consider storytelling a key aspect in a real (documented) or imaginative (fictional) narrative meaning that the purpose of a narrative is nothing but telling an entertaining, exciting, instructive, or didactic, the action of storytelling is rarely- if not saying always- a final goal in urban designs or urban development documents. What is attractive and progressive for a literary researcher or literature audience is not necessarily interesting for an urban developer, policymaker, resident or citizen, or citizen. To citizens who are supposed to see a highway crossing through their popular local park, it does not matter how the story of these changes is going to be told- within a timeline order or in a nonlinear, episodic, and associated form. Neither of these two storytelling

methods would affect the case and cannot prevent the tragedy from occurring. Perhaps the citizen prefers to face the case transparently and directly, so the considered story told by an omniscient single narrator or via the multiple voices and viewpoints of several narrators would not affect their living conditions and modes. However, it should also be added that audiences of projects and documents, which are a diverse range from citizens or urban managers, are not necessarily professional, thoughtful, and patient readers of literature. They often read the designs and documents schematically and functionally and look for suggestions for the project and its consequences. After all, the case is realized if the design or document is visited by citizens, not archived, and unavailable after it was prepared and approved. In other words, it must be possible in the first step for citizens to read, understand, interpret, and revise a document; then, one can consider in the next step how and with what accuracy and approach citizens read and interpret a document (Mandelbaum 1990). When we talk about the narrativity of an urban document, therefore, we must be attentive to its different narrativity rate with a literary work, and it is supposed to meet various expectations.

However, the most significant difference between urban development documents and literary-artistic works is that narrative is not just a rhetorical action in the urban development profession, not confined to the scope of word and literature but leaving an undeniable effect on the formation of places and form, activity, body, and soul of cities. The destiny of cities (their yesterday, now, and future) fully depends on the professionally planned and designed documents prepared about cities by experts under the support and order of upstream management institutions. These documents that provide an extent of narrativity, as explained above, can be classified into three categories (Ameel 2021; Zeng 2021): narrative for planning, narrative in planning, and narrative of planning."

- Narrative for planning: These are available and current narratives of a place, and some narratives before the planning process, such as local daily stories, artistic representations, or historical documents. The narrators of these narratives are not urban developers, urban planners, or designers. Residents, citizens, artists, ancients, and others are the narrators of these narratives. These narratives can be called "potential narratives." These are narratives inside the treasury, the treasury of people's hearts, or libraries' shelves. These are narratives that urban developers and their practice programs can- if not shall- refer to and be inspired by. However, there might be some situations in which urban developers order other narrators, such as writers, artists, local activists, historians, etc., to produce or create such narratives. This case usually occurs when the beginning of the urban planning process requires some "prior" narratives as a roadmap.

- Narrative in planning: These narratives include narrative documents and actions involved in the planning process, so no one except urban developers can be the narrator of them. These narratives emphasize the point that urban development in general, and urban planning and design in particular, are forms of storytelling; according to Throgmorton (2003), there is a kind of persuasive storytelling. The narrator of this story can be any actor in the planning and policymaking process: city, institutions inside the city, local-regional policymaking, private sector engaged in the construction and development process, and more specifically, urban developers and planning and design offices.

- Narrative of planning: These narratives are born in parallel to or after the planning process and action like branding or place-making strategies or even local stories told in response to planning products and development of the city. These narratives are a form of formal storytelling from the top or informal from the bottom, which is born after planning action. It is normal that narrators of these stories are no longer urban developers or planning organizations, but are people, institutions, and users that see the result of design in front of themselves. These are “late” narratives in planning.

These three categories of narratives that are matched with temporal order and progress of the urban planning process confirm a key distinction in planning narratives based on the narrators. The key point is that in contexts that lack any centralized, hierarchical, and top-down planning system, the formal urban development documents, or in other words, “narratives in planning” provide more power of action and effectiveness in shaping urban environment compared to “narratives for planning” and “narratives of planning”. Hence, analysis of the narratives and existing and hidden fictional lines in formal and professional urban development documents would effectively contribute to a deeper understanding of urban planning policies in any context and country. In the opinion of Ameal (2021), urban development documents would reveal the narratives existing in the city context and affect or challenge them, so they provide some claims about the past and recommendations for the future. Therefore, it is impossible to discuss the future and past of a city without examining its documents’ narratives (Kaplan 2002). The documents’ narratives finally become some strategies for spatial intervention. Urban developers use the structure of narratives to implement their strategies or their upstream organizations for urban environment transformation (Hawkins 2022). Hence, the documents’ narratives would create the reality or at least facilitate some strains of the reality (Mager and Mathey 2015). According to Throgmorton (2002), narratives have a solution for convincing others to do what urban development documents have in their minds. However, the question is whether

these documents are fully aware of their rhetorical powers and narrative functions. A definite answer to this question may not be as important as the narrative reading of the documents. Simply, it does not matter whether a document is precisely written like a narrative text; the substantial point is that all elements of the narrative are trackable in it: narrator, audience, place and time, problem’s nature, beginning, middle, and end of it, objective and result plot, and character; either they are written with the same titles and within narrative form or with formal-institutional literature and an implicit form. We just need to read and analyze them with a narrative view and narrative-researcher mind.

3.4. Towards the Narrative Analysis of Urban Development Documents

The urban expansion process and how politicians and urban engineers see this process can be found in the narratives mentioned in urban development documents. The study of the narratives in urban development documents helps to understand some elements of these documents’ complexities, which are not achievable and measurable based on the common academic methods for the analysis of documents. Narrative analysis deals with words, words’ meanings, words’ speakers, words’ addresses, and words’ orientations, and searches for a certain mental comment behind any idea or recommendation, which represents certain interests and values. Narrative analysis is opposite to abstraction, depersonalization, and devaluation of the academic positivist method, which mainly claims generalization and universalization (Sattler 2015). The study of documents from the narrative view reminds us that no evidence and reality are general and universal but have always been selected at a certain time and place by individuals/experts who are representatives of certain interests or values. The quantitative-numerical urban development often is silent about these values, talking about general facts and correct solutions, while qualitative-narrative urban development more cautiously speaks about the generality and correctness of the facts and solutions, believing that all of them depend on a value that the document carries it explicitly or implicitly (Eizenberg and Shilon 2016).

So far, city researchers and urban planners have tried to find a guideline for their interpretative strategies by referring to the narrative theory and story elements (Eckstein 2003). Since the narrative study on urban development documents is young and without any long experience in urban studies, its application would be normally ambiguous for many planners and designers. Hence, researchers have tried over the past decade to formulate appropriate toolboxes for understanding narrative structures of urban development documents; toolboxes that urban researchers can refer to and achieve a better perception and more skill in narrative reading of

urban plans and designs. James Throgmorton, Leonie Sandercock, Merlijn Vanhulst, and Lieven Ameel are among the most specific and persistent researchers in the formulation of such a toolbox in the light of a more holistic conceptual and empirical framework. Despite these attempts, there are still shortcomings that require a more dynamic and robust payoff between urban development and narrative knowledge.

The extant study tries to present a novel conceptual framework for narrative analysis of urban development documents through a more or less comprehensive review of theoretical literature of urban development and narrative studies, reading and analyzing the qualitative content of these documents. The components and themes constructing this framework and their relationships are discussed herein. As a narrative, an urban development document must answer three key questions (Gall and Haxhija 2020). 1) Why a story be told? With what objective and to whom? 2) How the story must be told? Within what context? With the presence of whom? From the language of whom? With what tools and strategies? 3) What would be the outcome of telling this story in the form of a document? What would be its possible consequences and effects? Answers to these questions can introduce a summary of all components that create the narrative quality of an urban development document. By considering the questions asked above and through qualitative analysis of the content of theoretical texts related to two urban development and narrative realms, this study has achieved the following components and categories for narrative quality analysis of urban documents. The explanations presented in the following paragraphs have been obtained from researchers' descriptions and interpretations of these components and the relationships between them that are achieved through qualitative analysis of theoretical texts.

3.5. Narrative Qualities of Urban Development Documents

- Narrative

A) The plurality or singularity of the narrator
Regarding the analysis of theoretical texts, it seems that the narrator is one of the first factors effective in identifying the narrative qualities of a text, including a document. Compilers of documents and narrators of them. They can be planners, designers, policymakers, and authors of a text. Identification of the author(s) of a story is the first step to finding which employer, authority, education, governmental agent, post or position, university, category or group, the social contract or social leverage would legitimate the author, giving them the power of talking and being heard (Ameel 2021; Eckstein 2003). The plurality or singularity of the narrator(s) is one of the crucial factors for knowing the narrator in an urban development document. However, authors of texts about the urban development profession often are not

transparent and have an abstract identity, but there is evidence in an urban development document that can outline the plurality or singularity of its narrators. Since formal urban development documents are mainly subject to an external subject, the voice of the document is a third-person voice; in other words, the narrator of the story/document is a third-person voice, coming from outside. The knowledge and awareness rate of this third-person narrator somehow reflects the certainty level of the document and the authority rate of the urban development system behind it (Eckstein 2003; Khakee 2000). An omniscient narrator who knows everything and who talks on behalf of the majority of citizens would define the problem, introduce its solutions, estimate the results, and illustrate a desirable image of the future; this narrator indeed reveals the centralized and hierarchical method of urban management and planning of the context for and in which, the document has been prepared. Unlike this case, those documents formulated based on participation and inclusiveness are multi-voice documents that are aware of multiple voices in the place and embrace them. These documents provide a form of narrativity, which is humbler and narrower, is aware of certain identities and interests as well as limited knowledge of the document, and tries to reflect the more original and direct voice of those narrators who are a part of the story world.

B) Uniqueness or multiplicity of narratives

The viewpoint and focalization appear immediately after the urban developer becomes the narrator of the document/story. Focalization is the lens through which we see the characters and events of the narration (Abbott 2002). When the third-person omniscient urban designer becomes the only narrator of an urban development document, the lens through which we see the events and characters of the narration will be fixed and single, shaping a narrative with a convergent voice without plurality. Therefore, the uniqueness or multiplicity of urban development narratives, more than anything else, goes back to the number of voices heard throughout the narrative.

C) Matched or conflicted narratives

Today's cities are no more single-narrative cities and are not defined by uniqueness, homogeneity, and unity; in contrast, cities include multiple narratives and find identity based on homogeneity, multiplicity, and diversity (Appleyard 1976; Sandercock 1998). According to Ameel (2021), since the city is a platform for conflicts between stakeholder and influential groups, as well as the tension between narratives and demands of these groups, documents' narrative may be finally affected by these confrontations, and not be decisive in determining their outlooks; therefore, these documents may combine several divergent outlooks in the framework of a single narrative to provide some solutions for alleviating these tensions. Hence, narratives are sometimes full of conflicts and

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contradictions. For instance, these conflicts may be found in the project's goals, or these contradictions may be matched with recommended measures for the project. On the other hand, it may present a description of the area's past that is not a great point for future image or might be opposed to the goals and outlooks of the project. These contradictions are highly common in the documents' narrative, so Healey (1993) believes that urban development plans must be usually considered as a process shaped from discussions and contrasts that comprise a set of technical and strategical claims, which are less likely to be integrated. According to Mandelbaum (1990), most urban development plans, more or less, finally have a degree of contrast and vagueness in themselves. Lack of integrity and existence of contrast in the documents' narratives, of course, decreases the power of persuasiveness. Fischer (2002) believes that this discontinuity indicates the unsolved contradictions that exist that are debatable even when the document is under preparation and has affected the final narrative. Hence, the detection of these contrasts in documents' narratives can provide good information about their preparation contexts and current narratives in the environment when the plan was in preparation. It is also possible to find the relationship between the dominant narrative and secondary narratives in the margins of documents based on the dominant outlook in the urban development documents and other goals formed beside the main outlook.

- Agents or actors

A) Characters involved in the narrative

It seems that human agents involved in the narrative must be considered in the narrative analysis of documents. These human agents are indeed the characters or actors in the story, which have their specific motivations and interests. Characters are highly important in narrative because narratives describe what has occurred for a group of characters in a certain place and time by using language (Eckstein 2003). In terms of diversity, the main characters (protagonists) of urban development stories seem less fictional stories, because the main characters in these stories mainly take the form of nonpersonal forces (e.g., capitalism, globalization, or defamiliarization of urban life). However, there are often individuals who seem to visualize these forces (such as evil builders, alienated members of criminal gangs, and courageous activists of local communities) and are shown as bad characters (antagonists) and heroes (Sandercock 2003).

B) Hero

Among all the characters of a narrative, the story is mainly shaped around the hero of that narrative. The introduction to the hero and its character's ups and downs throughout the narrative reveals the style and conceptual load of a narrative. In most traditional and single-voice urban development documents, the

hero is the author or city planner. However, there are some exceptions in this case (Grooms and Boamah 2017). It seems that the position of urban planners has changed recently with the advent of more democratic approaches; now, they play the role of instructors, becoming representatives of stakeholder groups' voices to help citizens obtain information about the city status and urban recommendations and achieve the required skills to be the hero of their stories.

- Audience

Audience and the method the audience is addressed in the text of the document/narrative is another topic that must receive attention when investigating the narrative qualities of urban development documents. Any author has to imagine some readers when writing a document, and any reader imagines an author when reading a document. In other words, in single-voice texts, ideal authors are created by the text; they are authoritative, authenticating, self-confident voices and insightful and impartial scholars who speak from within the text; on the other hand, they create some ideal readers who behave matched with criteria of these authors. In other words, urban engineers try in their narratives to engage their audiences in a way that they feel, think, and perform as the narrative suggests. In the opinion of Eckstein (2003), storytelling often-or maybe always- deals with determining and setting borders of local communities; thus, some audiences are placed inside the story contexts, and others are put outside of it. This bordering inherently has a contract, which exists in all stories between the narrator and the audience. Therefore, every narrative calls its ideal reader from its lines to trust in the narrator's observations and get results from the discussed topic of the document and its solution based on this trust. This recall, of course, is not the end of the receiving process. The actual readers or historical-geographical readers negotiate this recall based on various factors. Those experiences and perceptions that shape the mentality of readers may be different from the mentality that the story expects from its audiences. This difference can even make reading a severely resistive action.

- Orientation towards the context

Due to their future-based characteristics, urban development documents have highly temporal narratives that define a certain past, present, and future. Hence, one of the qualities that shape the narratives of urban documents is the view or interpretation of the past, present, and future of the place that the narrative plans for it (Ameel 2016). Urban development documents use the persuasion potential of narratives when telling the story, and may provide a specific description of the past of a neighborhood or area, a certain definition of its identity sense, or a special interpretation of its problems to shape a story for the future that works for them, constructs the recommended developments of future on the past's

trajectory, and promises a new start. Accordingly, the interpretation of urban development documents from the past, present, and future of a place is highly significant.

- Internal evaluation

It seems that attention to this component in theoretical texts of narrative is more rooted in the study by Labov and Waletzky (1967), so the footprint of the study by these two researchers is seen in all texts that consider this component. After the narrative's orientation towards the context (temporal and spatial natures), the narrator/author of the document must address the importance of their narrative explaining why it is written; it is called the internal evaluation of narrative. Simply, internal evaluation is a point or reason that the narrator quotes a narrative because of that. According to Ryan (2004), each narrative is quoted because it is important in the opinion of its narrator and conveys a topic that makes the narrative quotable. The importance of an urban development document often originates from a new interpretation that the document presents from the events of the past and present or goes back to a novel path or outlook offered to the audience by the document. This issue of how the narrator sees the terms, needs, and proprieties of the context and to what extent knows or confirms the ideals and forces that direct the place towards the future would affect his/her viewpoint about the narrative's importance. A narrative that sees its importance in saving the historical fabric against developers and profiteers due to the knowledge, experience, or viewpoint of its narrator would provide a worldview distinguished from a narrative that sees its importance in offering a new path for developing tourism and achieving economic profit from the historical fabric. Therefore, assessment of the reasons for a story's importance based on the viewpoint of the narrator can provide us with interesting information about that narrative's opinion about its formation context.

- Problem's nature

Another important quality in the analysis of the urban development document's narrative is the nature of the problem that the document addresses. Birch believes that the behavior of any actor in every narrative can have different meanings in different scenes. The selection and arrangement of this scene by the narrative indeed shows how each conduct or measure must be seen (Walter 2013). In the case of urban development documents, this scene is the description of the main problem that is the most substantial part of the policy-making process. By describing the problems or challenges of an urban place, the documents' narratives provide a specific interpretation of its conditions to justify their measures and intervention in it. A statement of the main problem or challenge for the urban development narrative is indeed a kind of field preparation for

legitimizing some measures, interventions, or projects that are important in terms of narrative. In other words, actors' measures or varied measures in the language of urban development documents are somehow defined in advance and at the step of the problem statement. Therefore, the nature of a problem that an urban development narrative deals with to address that place can direct its general narrative.

- Document's goal

In theoretical texts, especially based on what Throgmorton (2007) states, one of the most important functions of urban development documents is to convince the audience to do what the narrator has in mind. However, some documents are shaped based on the others' engagement and hearing their voices. According to Sandercock (2003), the narration of these documents can settle disputes and help to reach a shared outlook or solution in local communities. Therefore, these documents are mainly prepared to match the local community and organize the forces existing in a place to fulfill a design that can somewhat meet the interests of all stakeholders and influential groups. Training and pedagogy are other goals of urban development documents. Forester (2002) is one of the most important individuals who has addressed this aspect of urban development documents in theoretical texts. In such documents, detailed explanatory sections are mainly incorporated to make citizens responsible entities with a better perception of the city's circumstances and its development. The main purpose of these documents is to encourage individuals to go beyond their views and get closer to the world of other people who are not matched with them. In other words, these narratives are trying to create social change in a changing neighborhood.

- Evidence's position

Ameel et al. (2023) believe that the position of evidence and certain affairs (facts) in a narrative depends on the role of the urban developer in that narrative. Urban developers sometimes place the role of the narrative's protagonist, becoming a created genius and a scientist without any fault; thus, the evidence and facts brought to the project also become an academic and objective reality. Nevertheless, these are stories that make projects seem logical, and their evidence becomes definite. In the opinion of Walter (2013), "data" and "fact" are always created and are two subjective concepts. The selection of data, evaluation of them, making relationships between them, and analysis of them all occur based on the decision and goals of the project. The selection of goals, introduction and selection of alternatives, and illustration of the project's outlook also follow the same pattern. Therefore, the certainty of the evidence and facts in a document only depends on how that document narrates the evidence. The single-voice urban development documents with omniscient third-person narrators are more willing to present evidence

in the form of a certain and unbreakable fact.

- Internal coherence

Assessment of the internal coherence of a document's narrative is another subject that is highly effective in the persuasion power of documents and their acceptance by people. The presence of a temporal framework with a sequence having a start, middle, and endpoints, accurate and scheduled illustration of the scene and field of events occurrence, and attention to the plot and its corresponding characters all construct the internal coherence of a narrative, making it believable and acceptable for the audience. However, the ending is one of the most crucial factors for strengthening the internal coherence of a narrative. When a story has an end, an imbalance is solved in it. It means that the difficulty has finally ended, and good and evil have found their ultimate status and result. The end of the story indeed makes the whole content meaningful and purposeful, so the story seems complete (Herman and Ryan 2010). In urban development documents, the ending not only completes the planning narrative but also explains how a project creates the sense that problems are solved or a way is suggested to terminate these issues after many tensions and implementing recommended changes within an area; so the audience feels like at the end that a contrast is solved or an imbalance in the area is corrected. A powerful narrative ending makes this sense that the final offered conditions of the project are normal, predetermined, and inevitable regarding the past and present terms of the area. A powerful ending can give a high lingual and persuasive power to narratives of urban development documents. Therefore, the more close and certain the end of urban development documents, the more persuasive the narrative of these documents and the more their internal coherence and narrative power will be (Ameel, Gurr, and Buchenau 2023). The presence of a certain plot in narratives is another substantial element for their internal coherence. Of course, fictional structures and main and frequent plots of urban narratives are not as wide and diverse as literary narratives and can be classified

within a narrower and more predictable range. For example, Sandercock (2003) names three main plots in urban development: "conflict between newcomers and natives over the land rights and land use," "story of a young man who leaves his hometown to escape from county constraints and go to a bigger city," and "the lost golden age and the recurring story of deteriorated local communities." In addition to Sandercock, many authors have addressed the plot of urban development documents and its effect on the characteristics of the documents. In this case, Hayden White (1987) cited Northrop Frye's study to present a more general classification of urban development narrative. For this purpose, he introduces four main plots: romance, satire, comedy, and tragedy (Duncan 1996). He assumes that these four categories of plot make a difference in the worldview, beginning, and ending of urban development documents. Among all researchers who have studied plots of documents, Walter (2013) and Ameel et al. (2023) have tried more to address the properties of documents in each category.

- Result or outcome

Finally, the last subject that must be considered in the documents' narratives is the result or outcome of the narrative. In the opinion of Labov and Waletzky (1967), the value and meaning of the narrative highly depend on the events and their causal relationships throughout the narrative. The future outlook drawn by an urban development document can reveal its general worldview and viewpoint. The result of an urban development document may ultimately vary from tracing a utopia to suggesting some local measures in a place. Hence, this is the result or outcome of the narrative that outlines how that narrative must tell the future story.

According to the mentioned point so far, the components affecting the narrative quality of urban development documents and their relationships can be shown within a conceptual framework. This framework has been presented in Figure 1.

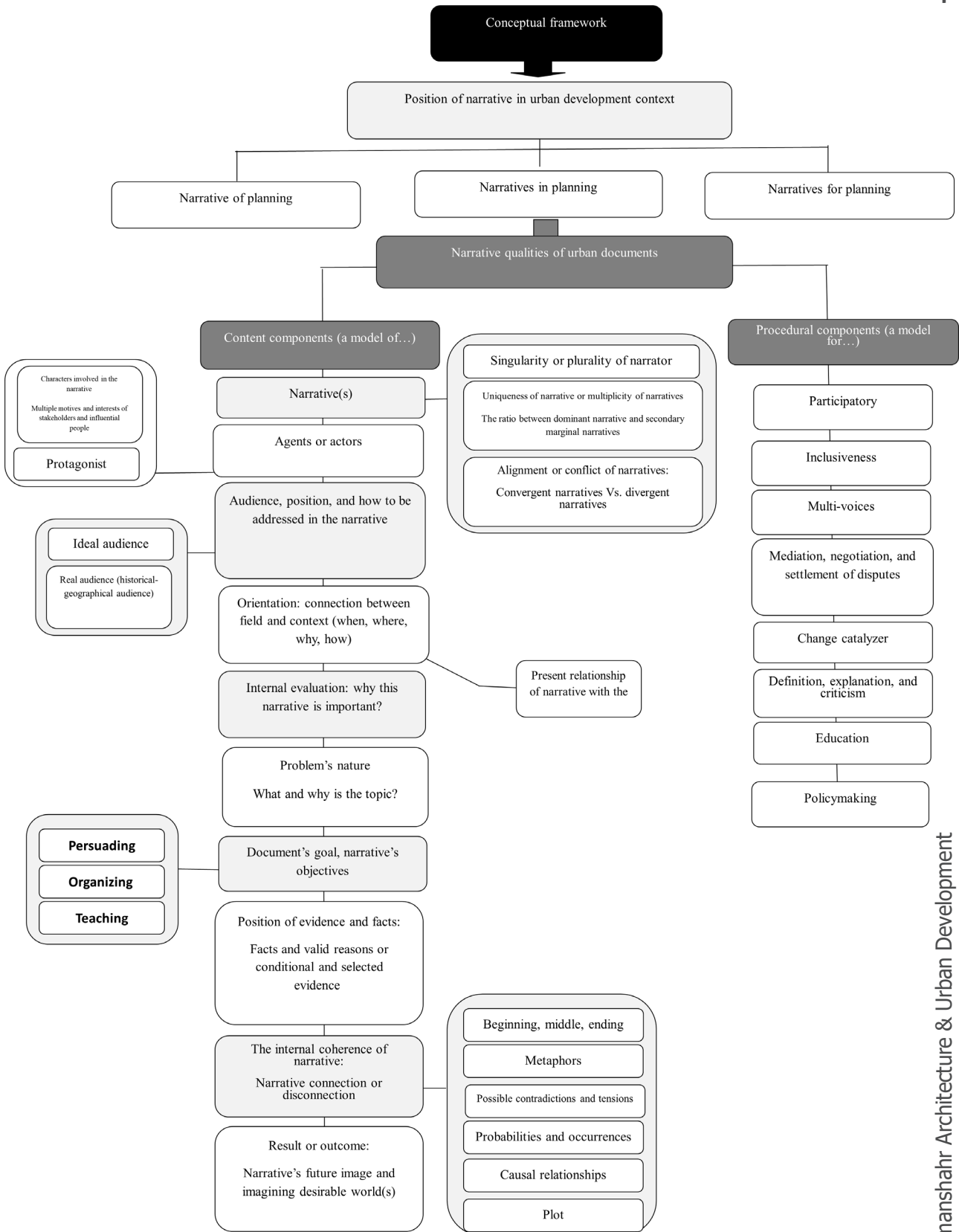


Fig. 1. Components Affecting the Narrative Quality of Urban Development Documents and the Relationship between them

According to this conceptual framework, narrative in the planning or various urban development documents provides some qualities that can be searched in any document, which can be analyzed based on these

qualities. The table below directly extracted from the conceptual framework of the study can be used to facilitate this process.

Table 3. Components Affecting the Narrative Quality of Urban Development Documents

Narrative Qualities		Effective Factors
Narrative	Singularity or Plurality of Narrator	Singular narrator: - Convergent, third-person, and external voice - Omniscient benefactor narrator who knows everything Plural narrator: - Humble and narrow voice - The narrator is aware of the limited knowledge of the document - Reflecting voice of other narrators - Dialogue-based tone
	Uniqueness or Multiplicity of Narrations	Unique narrative: - Urban engineers as the main narrators and decision-makers - A fixed and single lens for the assessment of events Multiple narratives: - A divergent narrative considering all conflicting and contrasting viewpoints - Recognizing marginal narratives
	Alignment or Conflict between Narratives	Integrated and matched narrative: - Coordination between results of analyzed conditions of past and existing status with future image - Conflicts between goals defined for the project - The conflict between suggested goals and measures - The conflict between the project's goals and outlook
Actors	Characters involved in the Narrative	Nonpersonal forces: - Capitalism - Globalization - Key characteristics of urban life - Progress - Neighbourhood (urban place) - Individuals who seem to embody these forces: Urban designers and planners - Urban management organizations - Urban builders and developers - Local community actors
	Protagonist	Urban engineer - City or urban area - A narrative with several protagonists, including residents, actors, stakeholders, and influencers
Audience	Ideal (Recalled)	Passive audience - An audience that is inside the bordering. - An audience that trusts in the narrator's observations. - An audience that accepts the narrative's results for the discussed problem in the document and its subsequent solutions. - An audience that is employed by the text to play a specific role and carries certain beliefs and values.
	Real (Historical-Geographical)	Active and storyteller audience - Negotiator audience - A divergent audience is classified based on the semantic commonalities, constructive experiences obtained from personal life in certain times and places, or their behaviors and treatments. - An audience that is an active storyteller. - An audience that expresses his/her view towards the world. - An audience that listens to others' stories.

Narrative Qualities		Effective Factors
Context	Past	Narrative interpretation of a place's history and causal relationships or occurrences leading to some events in the past.
	Now	Narrative's interpretation of a place's current status, its relationship with measures and events of the past, and its potential and opportunities for moving toward the future.
	Future	An image that narrative creates for a place's future.
Internal Evaluation	Reasons for the Narrative's Importance from its Viewpoint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being a saver - Preservation - Being pioneer - Being a progress factor - So forth.
Problem's Nature	The Topic becomes the Main Challenge of the Narrative. (Decorating the Scene for Actors and Events)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historical nature of the area - Area being at risk - Area in need of development - Area's inability to meet daily needs - So forth.
Document's Goals	Persuading	Making the audience match the narrator's views and comments about the future
	Teaching	Improving the skill and expanding the outlook of the audience
	Organizing	Integrating the conflicting comments and reaching a shared perception of the future
Position of Evidence	Certain and Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indestructible - Selected - In the position of academic and objective reality - Serving the main goal of the project
	Relative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relative - Contrast and conflicting - In the position of a subjective concept - The result of other voices' inclusiveness and their knowledge and experience about the environment - Obtained from shared understating of the reality
Internal Coherence	Clear Beginning, Middle, and Ending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The presence of a clear and attractive starting point encourages the reader to keep reading the narrative. - Selecting a peak or perigee point to start the narrative - Avoiding a vague beginning unrelated to the narrative - The presence of different tensions in the middle of the narrative - Existence of decision modes throughout the narrative - Clear ending that includes correction of imbalance, overcoming problems, and solving contrasts. - An ending with high persuasion power can make the project's recommendation inevitable and the logical result of the causal relationships between the narrative's events.
	Powerful Metaphors	Using metaphor as a measure for putting past or present terms in the framework of narrative and employing it for drawing a desirable future.
	Causal, Firm, and Logical Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of temporal sequence and causal relationship between events throughout the narrative - Avoiding description of events in the form of random occurrences related to past and future.
	Clear Plot	<p>Comedy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A young hero who reconciles the worlds of the past and today - Converting development to the reconciliation and redemption process - The desire for consistency between past elements and prospect - Non considering the necessity of deep evolutions for transiting from the present and reaching the future - Not seeing barriers and contrasts in the trajectory of the future outlook

Narrative Qualities		Effective Factors
Internal Coherence	Clear Plot	<p>Romance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The omniscient and most powerful protagonist - Converting development to a heroic journey to returning to self - Desire to return to the lost golden time - Desire to create the past in the future <p>Stire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The bounded hero trapped in the reality of life - Getting far from heroic action of future construction - Occupied with daily and necessary issues - Converting development to an everyday saving process - Multiple paradoxes in narrative - Lack of a transparent and clear image of the future <p>Tragedy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God-like heroes who make mistakes in his/her journey and collapse will start. - Promising description of current status - Finding abundant potentials and opportunities in the current status - Ambition for maximum development - Paying attention to market forces and strong economic motivations - Disconnecting the narrative from the existing reality and ignoring the limitations of local communities
Result or Outcome	The outlook that the narrative promises presents some recommendations to fulfill it.	

4. CONCLUSION

Narrative has become important in urban studies and urban development theory and practice over the past two and three decades. The first advent occurred in 1980 when the narrative eave began and highly influenced the realm of architecture and urban development in the English-language world, and led to many studies, papers, and books published about the city and narrative. In its evolved and perfect form, the purpose was to formulate a narrative base for the urban development profession, a base to be rooted in interpretive epistemology. Its most important value is respecting pluralism, diversity, and difference. The narrative confirms the more acceptability of the city when facing social and cultural diversity and multiplicity, respecting some values such as pluralism, democracy, distinction, contrast, multiple possibilities, decentralization, and acceptance of others versus integrity, inclusiveness, causality, hierarchy, discipline and central control, elitism, and causality-orientation. Narrative has influenced the context of city and urban development knowledge in different scopes, including formulation and reading urban development documents, semiology of constructed environment, urban policymaking processes, place stories and local knowledge of people, scenario-based planning and future studies, place construction and branding, mediation and negotiation, settlement of urban conflicts, criticizing and teaching and explaining urban development, and daily activities of urban development profession. Among the mentioned scopes, this study focuses on formulating and reading urban development documents and tries to create a conceptual foundation for the purpose by referring to the theory of narrative

and the opinions of narrative researchers. The first part of this paper defines the narrative and its conditions and requirements, trying to present a more or less clear description of narrative knowledge by reviewing it and the opinions of some most important narrative researchers. What kind of text is called narrative, and what are its characteristics? What are the constituents of narrative, and what relationship exists between them? What is the relationship between narrative and reality, and how can we see and shape reality through the narrative? These are questions that the first section of the study tries to answer. The second part targets the legitimacy of the urban development major and considers how the “narrative turn” obtained in human sciences in particular and urban development science, in general, has made knowledge bases and previous theoretical and operational goals of this major questionable and debatable. In the contemporary multiple and plural cities, the former legitimating factors are no longer useful, so the goals and practice of urban development, as well as its legitimating factors, must be revised. In this section, two models were presented and described after reviewing the theoretical literature about narrative in urban development: storytelling as “a model of urban development” and storytelling as “a model for urban development.” The first model emphasizes the narrative nature of this major, especially considering the urban development document as a full embodiment of this nature, while the second model has a more functional attitude towards the narrative, considering it an effective tool for urban development knowledge and action. Since narratives of urban development are one of the most important determinants for forces shaping cities, it is highly important to understand and analyze

these documents and narratives and their implicit and explicit fictional lines. To study the rhetorical-narrative functions of urban development documents, the next section incorporates and separates them into three categories: “narrative for planning,” “narrative in planning,” and “narrative of planning.” These three narratives have different narrators, writing reasons, writing times, impact ranges, and roles and positions but fundamental components of the narrative, including narrator, audience, time and place, problem’s nature, beginning and middle and ending, goal and result, plot, and character are trackable in all three categories. These narratives may seem simple, unhelpful, and completely descriptive, but a more profound and precise assessment indicates how each narrative is indeed a certain method of reality framing. Therefore, the narrative implicitly consists of selection and valuation and serves as an orientation benchmark even when it is describing a case. In other words, current narratives in documents would create urban reality or at least facilitate some strains of urban reality. Therefore, these narratives are beyond the description and also play a prescriptive-normative role, and the revelation of these roles requires a narrative analysis of urban development documents. The last part of this study deals with the narrative analysis of documents, considering this analysis as a “study of documents through the narrative lens.” How the narrative analysis is done? In light of what sensitivities, themes, and components? With what method and by whom? Although the studies conducted by urban developers and city researchers have produced rich and considerable literature on document studies through a narrative lens, there are still some shortcomings in this field. Humbly and realistically, this study has tried to take a step forward and formulate a guiding and supporting conceptual framework for urban development reading in terms of narrative based on narrative theorists’ opinions while relying on previous research achievements and quoting and reinterpreting them in the present field. The formulation of such a framework requires reading the role of the urban developer as the compiler of urban development documents. Consideration of the narrator’s role and its viewpoint in the narrative (focalization concept) is one of the key elements of this

re-reading. Uniqueness or multiplicity of narratives, and alignment and conflict of narrative in documents in the next step, are another key component that reveals some valuable facts about the planning system of a country. Identification of human agents involved in the narrative and their roles and positions is another component in the narrative reading of documents. Therefore, one can make meaning and relationship between the dominant narrative and another narrative that is mainly marginalized and suppressed. Moreover, the audience also appears in this step; the document is written for and towards whom, and what imagination of possible audiences is in the mind of the document. All documents are spatial and temporal and must specify their orientation and interpretation of past, present, and future places and conditions. Internal evaluation, the problem’s nature, and the document’s goal are other three key elements that together clarify what, why, and how the progress of the narrative is. Vague and ambiguous narratives may be valuable in art and literature, but people in the city context need precise, clear, authentic, and accountable planned and designed narratives. Assessment of the internal coherence of the documents’ narrative based on the key components of the narrative (beginning, middle, and end, causality, probability, and occurrence, plot’s structure, solution, and closure) is an important factor in evaluating the rate of success, persuasion, and effectiveness of the document. Assessment of the evidence’s position discloses the document’s orientation towards the facts and certain external affairs, revealing their certainty, conditionality, or relativity. Ultimately, attention to the future outlook illustrated by the narrative is the last step that makes this investigation possible. Ten successful components in addition to their subcomponents and their inter and middle relationships would create the conceptual framework of this study for analyzing the narrative quality of urban development documents; an analysis that is not an artistic-literary action as mentioned before but is a technical-ethical necessity that contributes to forming a new understanding of the urban environment and the role of people, urban developers, and policymakers in it.

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The authors commit to observe all the ethical principles of the publication of the scientific work based on the ethical principles of COPE. In case of any violation of the ethical principles, even after the publication of the article, they give the journal the right to delete the article and follow up on the matter.

PARTICIPATION PERCENTAGE

The authors state that they have directly participated in the stages of conducting research and writing the article.

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