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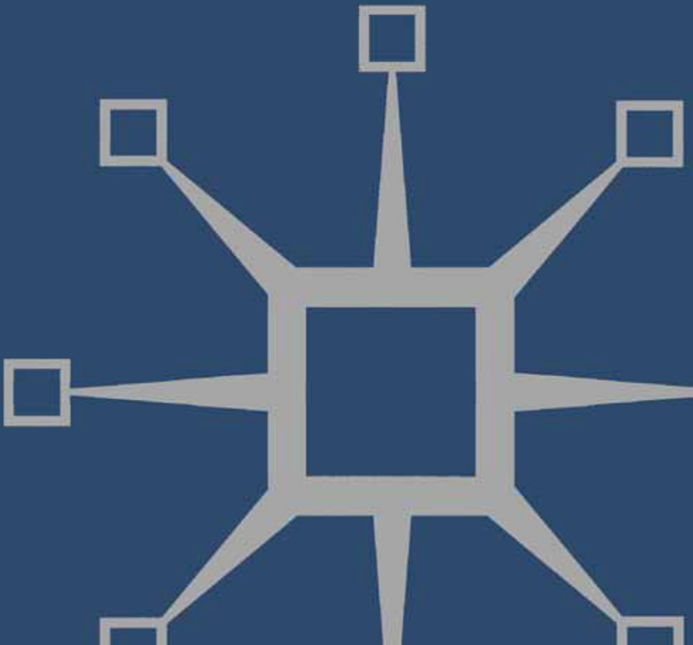
# International Place Branding Yearbook 2010

## Place Branding in the New Age of Innovation

Edited by

Frank M. Go & Robert Govers



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*Also by Frank M. Go and Robert Govers and published by Palgrave Macmillan*

PLACE BRANDING

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# PREFACE

The inspiration for this volume arose from our authorship of *Place Branding* (Govers and Go 2009) and our fascination with the topic, but we were also concerned about the lack of consensus as to the exact nature of place branding, not to mention its effective execution. Our worries were exacerbated by the changing conditions within an environment where place identities are “constructed, imagined and experienced, under conditions of seemingly pertinent discontinuity and interactivity” (Govers and Go 2009). The latter render obsolete many of the assumptions and structures, generally accepted as standard in place marketing research.

While the interest in place brand marketing has spawned an untold number of publications, the place brand definition remains “widely misunderstood” (Anholt 2005). Pushed by the emerging embedded world, we are entering a “new age of innovation”, in which social forms will change in fundamental ways and our reliance on familiar organizational structures of all kinds will diminish. An orientation toward the redefinition of identity (or identities), new structures and work processes is becoming evident. For example, in recent years, linkages have emerged across disciplines, including biology, economics, law, mathematics, psychology and political science. Disciplinary convergence of collective intelligence principles suggests invasions and infiltration cross disciplinary boundaries, and subsequently anticipates the potential of knowledge-based, co-creative innovation in markets.

Convergence in the fragmented place brand knowledge domain raises important questions: “How can the place branding field deal with the limitations of its knowledge and understanding in a complex and ever-changing world? And, subsequently, how can researchers and practitioners alike make sense of where they are?” In the light of these queries, the term “milestone” seems a particularly appropriate idea as it has withstood the tyranny of change across the millennia. When travelers made long, arduous journeys through unfamiliar territory, their confidence was reinforced by the regular familiar signs on the milestones indicating how far they had traveled and how many miles they still had to go. Similarly, the *International Place Branding Yearbook* series (see About the Book, below) affords researchers and practitioners milestones to know where they have been, where they are now, and where they are headed in the subject.

The series seek to encourage various forms of intellectual bridging across the field. It departs from the philosophy that advancement of place branding research and practice is more likely to occur through inclusiveness rather than exclusivity. Only through a generic hybridization process can new theoretical and methodological constellations be co-created in a way that affords researchers and practitioners a process that copes with knowledge limitations and an understanding of the surrounding world. In a more crowded, more interconnected, more volatile and more unstable world, a place brand serves as a marker on which to focus. Similarly, once properly harnessed, the place branding knowledge domain affords communities across the planet ample potential to understand how representing culture is central and indivisible from nation branding (Anholt 2002). If, however, the place branding field fails its significant mission, the next generation will remain ignorant of a brand as a vector of national image. Consequently, the capacity of the latter for living competently and responsibly will be dangerously diminished.

Toward the end of "discovery" we have tried in this volume to bring together a cross-section of literature. It is useful to reflect on the question of whether any of these selections were significantly influential per se. Our contributors seem to fall broadly into a number of categories that embrace a range of different objectives and roles. First, there are authors who are basically commentators. They have synthesized and diagnosed the trends they have observed, championed or helped to formulate in one way or another. Our second group of contributors could be classified as visionaries. Whether advisers, academics or professional observers, they seek to chronicle significant shifts or emphasize the way in which place branding and related activities are carried out, or major functions are executed. The third group of writers consists of practitioners. These contributors provide blueprints for action and describe a situation in which marketing has been applied to solve a challenge their organization was facing.

FRANK M. GO
ROBERT GOVERS

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are especially grateful to all the busy authors who agreed to contribute to this volume. Also, to the reviewers for their valuable critiques: Simon Anholt, Government advisor and author, UK; Adee Athiyaman, Western Illinois University, USA; Nicholas J. Cull, University of Southern California, USA; Keith Dinnie, Temple University, Japan; Marc Fetscherin, Crummer Graduate School of Business and International Business Department, Rollins College, USA; Joshua Fouts, Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress, USA; Juergen Gnoth, University of Otago, New Zealand; Peter van Ham, Institute of International Relations “Clingendael”, The Netherlands; Stephen Little, The Open University Business School, UK; T. C. Melewar, Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland; Lena Mossberg, Norwegian School of Management, Norway; Professor Dipak Pant, Università Carlo Cattaneo (LIUC), Italy; Johan van Rekom and Peeter Verlegh, both of the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, The Netherlands.

In addition, we would like to thank Ferdinand Kieboom, Centre of Tourism Management, the Rotterdam School of Management, for his help, and last but not least we acknowledge the ever-present and unfailing support of the Palgrave Macmillan Business and Management, Academic and Professional Publishing staff, in particular Stephen Rutt, Eleanor Davey Corrigan together with Keith Povey and Elaine Towns (of Keith Povey Editorial Services Ltd).

# ABOUT THE BOOK

## 2010 INTERNATIONAL PLACE BRANDING IN THE NEW AGE OF INNOVATION

Place branding is a very broad area, and it would be impossible for a single Yearbook to cover all of the relevant topics in depth. Indeed, there is considerable disagreement in academia, and both the public and private sectors about what these relevant areas are. In this New Age of Innovation, researchers and practitioners encounter an unfamiliar landscape and face challenges that necessitate the crossing of disciplinary boundaries. Following the science disciplines, the field must embark on an enriching hybridization process, following a *synthesis approach*, to co-create new conceptualizations and methodological constellations that will advance the place branding knowledge domain beyond “marketing magic”. Two subsequent volumes are scheduled that will address themes complementing the present volume:

- 2011 International Place Branding: Managing Outside Pressure to Protect Reputation
- 2012 International Place Branding and Sustainability Issues: Risks and Rewards

## YEARBOOK OBJECTIVES

The *International Place Branding Yearbook 2010* has the following objectives:

- To improve understanding of the place branding phenomenon, through synthesis and drawing material together for practitioners, researchers and educators;
- To provide a “state-of-the art” review of research through the lens of selected individual case studies; and
- To interpret the challenges place brands face in the New Age of Innovation, particularly through the exploration of the theme of information and communication technologies affording potentially new ways to cut costs, win customers and detect new business opportunities across borders.

## OVERVIEW

This volume features perspectives of place branding that have been reviewed by an editorial board. Our panel regarded the chapters by some contributors as keepers of the Holy Grail, by others as one-idea windbags, or less relevant. Our course through this minefield inevitably left some casualties. The final content consists of various approaches set out in three parts:

Part 1 frames the place branding process from multidisciplinary perspectives.

Part 2 presents individual case studies of countries, regions, cities, and so on.

Part 3 consists of a section of chapters that address the theme of innovation.

We hope that the reader will appreciate the breadth of contributions and use these to view place branding from a new perspective.

## AUDIENCE

This Yearbook is aimed at place branding practitioners, consultants, government agencies, ministries of economic development, and cultural institutes and foundations; regional and city governments, mayoral offices, regional, cantonal, state and city tourism bodies; economic and development agencies, investment promotion agencies; academics and researchers in marketing, international politics, public affairs, international marketing, international relations, globalization, economics and diplomacy; and journalists who serve a wider public to debate place marketing and branding issues.

# NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Simon Anholt** is a member of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Public Diplomacy Board, and an independent policy advisor. He is the leading authority on managing and measuring national identity and reputation, and the creator of the field of nation and place branding. He has advised the governments of over forty other countries, from Chile to Botswana, Korea to Jamaica, and Bhutan to the Faroe Islands. He is founding editor of the quarterly journal, *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy,* and author of *Another One Bites The Grass; Brand New Justice; Brand America;* and *Competitive Identity – The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions*. His most recent book is *Places: Image, Identity, Reputation.* He publishes two major annual surveys, the Anholt–GfK Roper Nation Brands Index and City Brands Index.

**Adee Athiyaman** is Professor of Marketing, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA), Western Illinois University, Macomb, Ill., USA. His research on marketing models has been published in more than thirty scholarly journals, such as the *Australian Journal of Management*, *Australian Journal of Marketing Research*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *International Journal of Media Management*, *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* and *New Zealand Journal of Applied Business Research*. His current research involves an analysis of business location models.

**Stewart R. Clegg** is Research Professor and Director of the Centre for Management and Organization Studies Research at the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia. A prolific publisher in leading academic journals in social science, management and organization theory, such as *Organization Studies, Organization Science, Organization, Human Relations, Sociological Review* and *Administrative Science Quarterly,* he is also the author and editor of about fifty books.

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**Frank M. Go** is Professor and Director of the Centre for Tourism Management at the Rotterdam School of Management (RSM), Erasmus University, The Netherlands. Prior to his present post he served within business faculties at universities in Canada and Hong Kong. His research focus is on marketing strategy, destination images and brand identity, ICT and innovation, and sustainable business development. He serves as Academic Director of the MSc program – a joint program of RSM/Hotel School, The Hague – and is a Visiting Professor at Rikkyo University, Tokyo, Japan, and the Open University Business School, UK. Go has also (co-)authored more than 125 articles, official reports and book chapters, in which most of his writing has focused on the need to integrate technological, market and organizational change in travel, destination and hospitality contexts to improve the effectiveness of organizations.

**Robert Govers** is currently serving as Adjunct Associate Professor, holding the Visit Flanders Chair in Tourism Management of the Consortium University of Leuven, Belgium, where he was also Project Manager at the Flemish Centre for Tourism Policy Studies. In addition, he is a visiting faculty member with The Hotel School, The Hague; Rotterdam School of Management; IULM University in Milan; the University of Turin; and several institutes in Dubai. He has co-authored many publications in the field of place branding and image, tourism, hospitality and quality management. As a project manager, Govers has been involved in many consultancy projects for reputable organizations such as IATA, the European Commission, the Flemish government and various Dutch ministries and tourism promotion boards, and has taught courses on place branding, marketing, services marketing, strategic services management, and research methods.

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# INTRODUCTION

*Frank M. Go & Robert Govers*

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” In the aftermath of the financial debacle, Charles Dickens’ cryptic comments from *A Tale of Two Cities* could just as easily sum up the situation faced by the place branding industry. To survive and prosper, place branding professionals must assess emerging changes carefully, shaping the future of the place branding process. Environmental scanning is an effective means of analyzing salient trends and patterns relating to the business environment in which place brands operate. Many of these forces for change are reflected in scholarly publications which draw on current research and thinking in the field. The purpose of this introduction is to provide insights through a review, albeit not exhaustively, of where the place branding field can most fruitfully detect attention. For this purpose the following dedicated journals exist: *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, *Journal of Brand Management* and *Journal of Place Management and Development*. From our enquiry the following central issue emerged: How to establish a delicate balance between place brand stakeholders to promote effective place brand strategy and maximize the benefits of economic, social and cultural development? To this end we look briefly here at five themes: (i) defining the strengths and limitations of the place branding field; (ii) place brand positioning; (iii) integrating place brand marketing and managing place brand interaction; (iv) place brand performance assessment; and (v) the future place brand research agenda. Publications relating to each theme are summarized in tabular form, while a linking thematic diagram is presented in Figure I.1.

## DEFINING STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE PLACE BRANDING FIELD

### What Is Place Branding About?

In framing, addressing and synthesizing work in the field of place branding we must start with its antecedents. Since 1850, places, towns, cities and regions have been involved in promotion and the use of publicity to “sell” place, which subsequently evolved into contemporary place marketing

(Gold and Ward 1994). Place marketing attracted interest in the 1980s and 1990s among local authorities and researchers (Ashworth and Voogd 1990; Kotler *et al*. 1993; Ward 1998) encouraged by important trends: a decline in the preeminence of world manufacturing, the emerging information- and communications-based technologies, and shifts in the composition and residential preferences of national populations in North America and Western Europe. As a result of intense competition and the need for clear product differentiation, brand strategies encapsulating both tangible and intangible features have been formulated and implemented for almost everything, including places. In recent years the terms place brand and place branding have become a fundamental part of the marketing of nations, regions and cities. Brands are seen to add value for countries, regions, cities and their stakeholders. Among others things, they simplify users' decision-making by affording a sense of familiarity, security and consistency (Raaf 2000).

A debate exists as to whether, as an extension of corporate brand theory, a country or city could be subjected to brand management practice. The process of place branding occurs in the overlap of three knowledge domains. These are, first, the academic disciplines that study mass culture, outside the business schools; second, the realm of marketing science; and, third, the realm of public policy-making. Nation branding tends to feature a holistic approach and a high level of ambition, which reflect the "can-do" approach of the marketing field, in contrast to the common-sense assumption that public diplomacy is by no means the decisive factor in determining foreign perceptions (Melissen 2006).

A brand emerges as various authors, citizens, consumers, the cultural sector and marketing intermediaries (Holt 2004; Quelch and Jocz 2007) tell stories that involve the place brand. Marketers typically examine the perceptions of individual consumers. Thereby, possibly ignoring the collective nature of these perceptions: "the stories have become conventional and so are continually reinforced because they are treated as truths in everyday interactions" (Holt 2004, p. 3). The difficulty of labeling the overlap between the areas linked to the study of place branding caused Anholt (2005a, p. 117) to distinguish between three definitions of place branding: first, "a popular and least precise way referring to buzz words and vague marketing terms; second, a simple understanding, which refers to a designed visual identity – name, logo, slogan, corporate livery"; third, the advanced definition covering "a wide area of corporate strategy, consumer and stakeholder motivation and behavior, internal and external communications". The latter affords countries or cities a window for embarking "on conscious branding", choosing "some industries, personalities, natural landmarks and historical events that could provide a basis for strong branding and storytelling"

(Kotler and Gertner 2002, p. 258). However, developing a place brand that is sustainable has several implications. It requires a deep understanding of a country's heritage. In that sense, a brand is a focal point and shorthand for the personality of place. Put another way, the representation of culture is a central and indivisible medium for nation branding (Anholt 2002b, p. 238).

Places may leverage brands that engender images or symbolic meanings, which may provide social and communication value. However, they can also be easily misinterpreted, if the "context specificity of place" (Warnaby 2009), including their "historical contexts and various spatial scales" (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2008) are ignored in favor of marketing science. The short-lived brand campaign "Cool-Britannia" in the 1990s serves as an illustration of such ignorance.

## Limitations of Place Branding

Despite its long pedigree in place marketing, the term place branding does not have a well-defined meaning (Anholt 2005a, p. 117). What is commonly referred to as "place branding" appears still to be in an infant stage of development, as a result in particular of the field's heterogeneity, causing a salient limitation to constructing a place brand theory. Its heterogeneous nature is illustrated by reference to an affinity and possible overlap between public diplomacy and nation branding (Melissen 2005, p. 22).

The borders of the former are limited to the practice of diplomacy, whereas the latter appears borderless, because it concerns the mobilization of all the nation's forces to contribute to marketing the national image abroad (Melissen 2005, p. 22).

From a strategic perspective, Balmer and Gray (2003) try to reassure us that "corporate level brands can also be applied to countries, regions and cities". Hankinson (2007, p. 251) presents "five guiding principles based on recent developments in corporate branding theory". Moreover, Kotler *et al.* (1993) and, following them, Rainisto (2003) identified key success factors in place branding practice. However, a serious limitation of the field remains – that is, it lacks a traditional theory to accommodate "the context specificity of places" (Warnaby 2009), in part because the latter "involves a much greater and coordinated effort than public diplomacy" (Melissen 2005, p. 22). In addition, Olins (2002, p. 241) presents historical evidence suggesting that nation branding may face a significant impediment, because "many detest the word brand", which appears for some "to have trifling and superficial implications unworthy of the national idea". Yet, "the need for collective understanding and appreciation of place marketing, the achievement of wide cooperation and clear role allocation, the implementation of marketing as a long-term process and the expansion of marketing understanding to fields other than tourism development" were identified as significant issues in relation to future marketing (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008, p. 150). In turn, a collective understanding and appreciation of place marketing resides in a paradigm. For framing and synthesis purposes we must therefore look beyond place branding antecedents to the evolving marketing discipline and cognate disciplines within a temporal–spatial context.

Within such a framework we note, more specifically, that first, the place branding literature lacks an agreed "language for the holistic or all encompassing brand" (Hanna and Rowley 2008). The term "place" and its associated vocabulary, including "country, nation, region, city and destination" in relation to tourism can easily lead to misinterpretation of place marketing and branding. Second, case studies based on multidisciplinary perspectives, ranging from political philosophy to public relations, public diplomacy and destination marketing abound. While the case study method has strong properties, it also has a major disadvantage: it is difficult to generalize about the strategies of different place brands. Understanding the differences that exist between the various brands at the scale of the nation, region or city requires sophisticated exploratory models. At present, place branding analysis can easily become overwhelming in its multitude of topics and concepts. Third, the field lacks the paradigmatic status needed to escape from the risk of remaining a fragmented and shallow body of knowledge. To bridge the gaps between fields of knowledge that have developed, largely independently, the place branding field needs a "common ground" in terms of terminology, definitions, conceptualizations and theory necessary to develop the defining characteristics of a paradigm; namely, a "shared constellation of beliefs, values, techniques . . . models and examples" (Kuhn 1970, p. 175).

## PLACE BRAND POSITIONING

Place branding should be about making choices; the construction and representation of the unique identity of place; a choice for brand values that bring people (public, private and civil society actors) together, but also creates a value match with potential target markets, linking the experience of place with perceived images; and expectations of value matched customers. That is exactly what happened in the Leeds region. Here, ten local authorities with a combined population of 2.9 million, 100,000 businesses, a £48 billion sterling economy and 34,000 graduating students each year are burying old rivalries and uniting under the Leeds brand. The united stance is putting Leeds back on the map. Now the challenge is matching the expectations of target markets of business, residents, students and visitors to the projected image: "Leeds Live it Love it" (*Financial Times*, 17 March 2010, p. 1).

## Imagery and Place Branding

Imagine a place without a name. It existed, and still exists, in the world's poorest forsaken, lost or abandoned places. Since ancient times, the original settlers described the character of the area or settlement by place names that had meaning for them (Goodall 1987, p. 355). This shift away from a nomadic existence caused the newly sedentary humans to define their world by boundaries. Similarly, today's logos function as visual aids and provide instant recognition for a brand or a product, transcending international boundaries and language barriers (Kohli *et al.* 2002). Brand value, or measures of satisfaction, that individuals derive from a place or location relative to their goals, can be measured by place utility (Goodall 1987, p. 355).

Among other things, place branding attempts to build a positive place image, through either perceived or vicarious experience (Govers and Go 2009, p. 41). The current perspectives and the need for a place branding model (Govers and Go 2009, p. 40) have come about in an evolutionary way. Since the 1950s, the concept of place developed through its subsequent appropriation by cultural geography and linking of place and politics. Until the late 1960s and early 1970s, the literature related to the marketing and selling of place, seldom in terms of measuring place utility and quality assessment and representation – that is, the image making (Boulding 1956) that aimed to portray place to potential buyers in the best possible light. It was not until the 1980s, when urban geographers began to address issues raised by the recognition of globalization and environmental perception, that semiotics and the phenomenological experience of tourism became central variables in the study of "place marketing". Cultural theorists such as Zukin (1995) and Harvey (1989) focused specifically on place advertising's hegemonic discourse, landscape change as a result of place commodification, and on the social justice issues raised by differential consumer access to the place market. It seems fair to credit Kotler *et al.* (1993) with putting the field of place marketing on the map. Their clarion call to arms attracted considerable attention: "At any moment, a large and growing number of places – cities, regions and entire nations – are on the sick list"(p. 61). Gradually, other researchers and practitioners extended the notion of place marketing and applied the marketing concept and techniques across a wide variety of geographical and cultural settings. Since then, an increasing number of studies have been undertaken to dispute Kotler's claim that places must become attractive "products" and gain a better understanding of how marketing functions in the framework of nations, regions and cities. Recently, place branding has emerged in the literature (Anholt 1998; Van Ham 2001; Kavaratzis 2004; Melissen 2006; Govers and Go 2009). For example, destination marketers are "confronted by increasing product parity, substitutability, and competition" (Morgan *et al.* 2004) it is therefore essential for them to understand which key features distinguish their brand from that of rival destination brands. Yet Pike (2004, p. 102) identified a paucity of reported analyses of "destination brand positioning slogans, which represent the interface between brand identity and brand image".

## Country-of-origin (COO) theory

Within the brand positioning development arena, widely held country images affect attitudes towards a nation's products and services and the ability to attract investment, businesses and tourists (Kotler and Gertner 2002). In turn, strategic marketing management aims to position the country's image, attractiveness and products in a way that creates better user "buy-in" and satisfaction with a place brand. For example, Spain is a well-documented, successful case of the actively orchestrated repositioning of a nation by leveraging the painter Joan Miro's "sun to symbolize how Spain overcame its suffering from the effects of having a negative image" (Gilmore 2002). Critical to the creation of a durable country brand position is the identification of the brand's values. The latter consist of intangibles that must be translated, subsequently, into a suitably emotionally appealing brand personality and, within a network of brand relationships, the brand message must be fused and operationalized (Gnoth 2002) into an efficiently delivered brand experience aimed at a targeted audience.

In the literature, country-of-origin (COO) theory is seen as a viable place branding strategy. It implies that the latter draws on resources, intellectual capabilities and motivations manifested in a selected country. A review of the multifaceted nature of country equity in relation to product-country images and their effects caused Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) to conclude that country-based marketing is often underused or misdirected because of an inadequate understanding of the meaning of "country branding". They identified knowledge gaps and misconceptions in particular as impediments of effective country branding strategy development and implementation. However, a case presented by Peeter Verlegh (Chapter 5 in this volume) offers evidence that COO not only has a direct influence on consumer product evaluations, but also moderates the impact of other marketing variables, such as advertising. This is somewhat nuanced by Beverland and Lindgreen (2002), who found that managers should assess carefully the history of category association before embarking on the application of COO to raise consumer and trade awareness of their products. Recently introduced flexible forms of production (Clegg and Kornberger, Chapter 1 in this volume) may undermine COO in favor of glocalized brands. For example, Nike's branding power is intertwined with African-American heroes, including Michael Jordan, Spike Lee and Tiger Woods, who have endorsed its products since the mid-1980s (Klein 2000 , p. 369), thereby using local signifiers to market global commodities.

## MANAGING PLACE BRANDING: FROM INTEGRATION TOWARD INTERACTION

In the literature, place branding effectiveness is typically seen to depend on integration – that is, the attempt to establish a delicate balance between stakeholders, to promote effective place brand strategy and maximize the benefits of economic, social and cultural development (Borg 2008; Braun 2008). The shift toward a knowledge-based economy conjures up the reality of "knowledge regions" and "knowledge networks" (Winden *et al.* 2007, p. 547). Consequently, the urban stakeholders are, increasingly, not only embedded in social relations and constrained by physical constraints, but simultaneously afforded strategic degrees of freedom by the internet. Winden *et al.* (2007) found that urban stakeholders benefit variously from the shift toward a knowledge-based economy. This may be because they have developed along "traditional administrative borders that are the basis of policies" (Winden *et al.* 2007, p. 547), rather than taking note of the approach known as actor network theory (ANT). It has developed within science and technology studies, and affords leveraging networks and brands as integrators within a service dominant place marketing logic (Fyrberg and Juriado 2009; Warnaby 2009). This "interaction approach" has been championed by the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing Group (IMP) since 1982. The underlying principle is based on the importance of decision-makers understanding the significance of interaction within the context of continuing relationships and the broader networks of which their organizations form a part (Ford *et al.* 2003). For example, Hankinson, (2004, p. 115) identifies the need for brand extension "from the core to include primary services, the brand infrastructure, media and communications and consumers" and describes this as "a ripple effect in which brand relationships are gradually extended through a process of progressive interaction between a network of stakeholders". Gnoth (2002) conceptualizes interacting service providers as a network rather than a channel of distribution. He describes how possible network synergies can be identified for place brand management through a gradual extension of the tourism brand attributes. For example, Germany's holiday destination brand, involving landscape and cultural artifacts such as castles, viticulture and art, might include reference to car brands – for example, Mercedes, BMW and VW (Gnoth 2002).

The popularity of information and communication technologies (ICTs) render brand marketing processes increasingly ubiquitous and complex. Therefore, their stratification required a typology for the navigation of interactive brand marketing processes involving four distinct layers (Go and Fenema 2006) so as to attain optimal relational effects.

The first layer concerns the *material* devices or infrastructures that constitute a circuit of electronic impulses in order to construct networks of communication; the second layer, certain places act as the *relational* space within hubs such as the "global city" (Sassen 2006) where financial systems and multinational organizations represent a coordination mechanism to connect other points or nodes; the third layer concerns flows of *information*, including online representation, "powering"; and the final, *mental* layer is the "home" of the "managerial elites", who mastermind and play a dominant role in the integration of place marketing channels and communication processes. Interactions between these layers of the system lead to complex, if not chaotic patterns (Snowden, Chapter 4 in this volume), but also to novel opportunities (Go and Fenema 2006). For example, Berg (2008) notes how the more "dedicated and committed positioning efforts in the Baltic region are carried out in the form of networks, often containing stakeholders from multiple sectors of society". However, strikingly these networks lack government engagement, causing Berg (2008) to refer to "governance without government."

The growing complexity of networks, including many moving parts governed by no set relationship which can organize structurally (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004, p. 228), calls for a process of value co-creation through resource integration (Vargo and Lusch 2006). Such relational exchanges will be the result of interaction, and enabled by the capacity for exchanging *information*, between the members of a "strategic network" (Berg and Braun 1999), united around and responsible for the place brand agenda. Under conditions of decentralization there is a growing recognition that 'where' still matters, because location, for example, still impacts on the performance of corporations. But the factors influencing where businesses locate, have become much more complex. Things that can be expressed electronically in bits, including documents, pictures and messages, can be processed at any time and in any location. The new challenge for managers is to optimize the use of physical and virtual space, where the atoms expressed as desks and tables are blended with the bits of information processed and stored in the virtual space of telecommunications to create flexible work environments. Today, it is also the intangible innovations that make important contributions to the creation of consumer experiences, which are driven increasingly by brand communities (Loewenfeld and Kilian 2009).

The Age of Innovation, which we address in this introduction, concerns the juxtaposition of four, previously mentioned activities, involving interacting, allocating, organizing and monitoring processes (Bonoma 1984; Go 1992). First, an increase in the speed and frequency of interaction requires data conversion into managerially valuable information more rapidly than has previously been possible. This has depended vitally on technological developments that leverage novel opportunities for implementing competitive place brand strategies (Govers and Go, Chapter 12 in this volume). Second, decision-makers must be aware of critical resources that are available for allocation to the productive usage of a place brand. These new resources include leveraging intangible assets, particularly tacit knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995) – that is, all those things that place brand stakeholders know and have transferred in memories, skills, experience and so on, into the productive system. The value of such knowledge depends directly on the space in which it is produced and represents a significant amount of symbolic capital; its appropriation and redistribution. The irruption of knowledge into the economy leads to a string of debates and legal issues, and their derived intellectual property rights. Social networks such as Facebook, home to 40 billion photographs (Cukier 2010, p. 3) affords an indication of the possible implications for intellectual property and its commercial exploitation.

Third, theoretical reasoning has found ways to recognize and create conceptually assets of compounding, not just capital and labor, but also creative thinking about organizational processes and how brands help decision-makers to "navigate the complex process of creative judgment to identify and develop original and valuable ideas" (Ind and Watt 2006). So far, place brand research has paid only limited attention to the intra- and inter-organizational knowledge transfer characterized by a continuous flow of ideas, information, values and tastes, mediated through mobile individuals, symbolic tokens and often electronic simulations (Anderson 1983) within emerging many-to-many networks (Gummesson 2006). Finally, in *Place Branding* we covered the consumer journey that involved concepts of place identity, projected image, product offering, consumption experience and perceived image (Govers and Go 2009). This may also be represented as a set of episodes that contribute to building the place brand personality over time. Monitoring user relationships in the place brand realm involves a large variety of factors and knowledge, beyond consumption of the "greater good" (Quelch and Jocz 2007).

## Organizing Stakeholders' Roles and Responsibilities

Most places, including countries, regions, towns, cities and rural counties, compete to attract investment from corporations, and therefore location decisions influence employment, directly or indirectly. The scale of privately-owned flagship developments has increased since the 1980s and requires ever-higher-spiraling investments, which are widely discussed, but to a lesser extent researched (Kent and Brown 2009). Flagship developments include highly visible showcases, a few of which, such as the Eden Project in Cornwall, UK, are found in a rural setting, but typically flagship developments, including shopping malls, museums, art galleries and cultural centers, are located in or near urban agglomerations (Kent and Brown 2009) in support of "regeneration". Berg *et al.* (2005) identify "investors" as a distinct category of place users. Their addition of "investors" as a distinct user category is relevant, because whereas residents, employees, business and industry typically have an understanding of the local environment, in contrast, the financial power associated with "foreign boardroom" investors allow them to operate their supply chains from corporate centers, unhampered by geographical constraints. Consequently, outsiders' involvement in the decision-making process is popularly seen to be at "arm's-length", attached very little, if at all, to place and "footloose" in nature. An example of "investors as a distinct category of place users" is the Russian industrial entrepreneur Roman Abramovich, who leveraged his ownership of a "local" English soccer club, Chelsea (London), in order to achieve (inter)national celebrity status. American-led globalization is another example of foreign investor-driven "brand colonization" of the local environment, including by McDonald's and Nike, and has triggered protests across the planet (Yan 2003).

The "participatory relationships" include interactions between a combination of four kinds of place users (Kotler *et al.* 1993): (i) visitors; (ii) residents and employees; (iii) business and industry; and (iv) export markets. From a communications perspective it is very hard, if not impossible, in contrast to the corporate brand situation, to control interactions in the place context. This is simply because the communicative effects of a city's interactions, particularly the messages that are exchanged and incidents that take place among its users, derive from the democratic principle of "free choice", including, the free flow of information (Quelch and Jocz 2007). Such engagement does not necessarily aim to prioritize the place brand reality: public spaces strategies, infrastructure projects, organizational and administrative structure and the "city leaders'" vision for the city, the strategy adopted or the financial incentives provided (Kavaratzis 2005, p. 337). In particular, the credo of marketing, that user satisfaction is the key to profitability, has been “swallowed hook, line and sinker” by many place brand practitioners, who may overlook the observation of The Chartered Institute of Marketing (2007), that the status of the marketing field “with the customer and the rest of business” has never been lower. Furthermore, the place brand relationship is no longer represented by a dyadic buyer–seller relationship, but by many-to-many networks which depend on infrastructure and organizational capabilities that draw on collective intelligence to overcome social dilemmas.

One set of such social dilemmas – the encroachment of “new private spaces” on a local scale – caused Minton (2009) to argue that untested urban planning may not only transform British cities, but also the nature of the public space of citizenship. In particular, raising physical barriers would contribute to social exclusion, undermine trustworthy relations, and by extension lead to a divided, mistrustful nation.

## Common Pool Resource Governance

Yproductions, a Barcelona-based cultural production company, observes how place branding depends increasingly on consolidated cultural producers as opposed to vernacular culture or community engagement with the local scene. Paradoxically, Aaker (2004) notes that brand relevance depends on maintaining the brand’s heritage and business strategy. For example, Go *et al.* (2003) examine how cultural identity, ethics and education, as embodied in heritage and local skills, can become an asset for the value enhancement of the place brand. For the purposes of paradigm building, such a pursuit must be grounded in a sense of identification, and build up an agreed set of resources, norms and standards. Such a “shared repertoire” of resources represents the material traces of the place branding process. Codified knowledge or written files can constitute a more explicit aspect of this common repository, though more intangible aspects, such as procedures, policies, rituals and specific idioms, are typically also included (Wenger 1998). There is an urgent need to understand place branding in the contemporary debate about knowledge. What constitutes a valid place brand body of knowledge? There are two epistemological camps in the present debate on the nature of knowledge (Burrell and Morgan 1979). On the one hand, reference is made to the “objectivist” perspective, while on the other there is the practice-based perspective. Both perspectives offer advantages and disadvantages. For example, it has been suggested that the objectivist framework underestimates the extent to which knowledge is embodied (tacit), embedded (context dependent), and subjective (value laden). The existing knowledge of place branding is derived from multiple disciplines, marked by distinctive epistemological perspectives, which in turn characterize what we know about place branding in sometimes very different ways. Therefore, they have different implications with regard to how the knowledge management of place branding should be structured and organized in future. Because the status of the marketing field has never been lower with the customer and the rest of business, an advanced version of corporate strategy applied in the place branding process should emphasize neither a customer-centric nor supplier-centric approach. However, it should unlock a balanced-centricity within many-to-many networks (Gummesson 2006). The nature of this choice marks it as highly interdependent and therefore be viewed as a social game through the lens of the Prisoner's Dilemma (Kollock 1998). Kollock views social dilemmas as "situations in which individual rationality leads to collective irrationality. That is, individual rational behavior leads to a situation in which everyone is worse off than they might have been otherwise". The Prisoner's Dilemma perspective has spawned thousands of studies of real-world problems. It has yielded evidence that there are ways to manage such dilemmas to foster cooperative behavior.

Common pool resource governance offers place brand decision-makers a way to deal with social dilemmas. This term is taken from the work of Ostrom and Hess (2001), whose study confirmed that the governance and management of common pool resources can be usefully applied in the analysis of information and the intellectual public domain. Ostrom and Hess's study findings drew on a large body of international interdisciplinary research across a time span of twenty-five years. Similarly, for place branding to function effectively, the stakeholders need to be sympathetic to the ideas around which the group is based and knowledge is shared. Common pool resource governance would enable a community collectively to specify the best direction, and make sense of a myriad of events, trends and cross-currents, in an attempt to forecast how the environment will unfold (Day 1990, p. 7) and apply "innovative governance for the attainment of balanced relationships" (Halemane *et al.*, Chapter 16 in this volume) among various place brand stakeholders.

## MEASURING PLACE BRAND PERFORMANCE

Ashworth and Voogd (1990) refer to a combination of instruments: promotional measures, spatial-functional measures, organizational measures and financial measures within a "geographical marketing mix" context to monitor place brand performance.

To be effective, managers must constantly assess the relationship and position of their place brand. In recognition of the value of brands as intangible assets, increased emphasis has been placed on understanding how to build, measure and manage brand equity (Kapferer 2005). What makes a place brand tick, and what it is worth has become the critical task on which success stands or falls. Two interesting subareas of this topic are the measurement and valuation of brand equity at different levels – customer, product market and financial market – and the relationship of customer equity to brand equity. The discussion of brand equity is based on the conceptual framework of Aaker (1991, 1996). The overall thrust of Aaker's work is to articulate what it means to be a brand. The deconstruction of a brand into loyalty, perceived quality, awareness, associations and proprietary assets, as proposed by Aaker, sets the stage for measuring the strength of a brand. In this section, these dimensions are applied to examine various relevant publications about or related to brand equity in the context of countries, regions and cities.

Brand equity is "the set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name, symbol, that adds to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers" (Aaker 1991, p. 15). It is the name and symbol of the brand that essentially defines the equity asset.

In turn, the equity asset is the monetary value of a brand or the total measurable impact on both the organization and its market. This measurement is typically represented by a number of dimensions. *Brand loyalty*: the ability of the brand name to attract and keep a high percentage of customers dedicated to the brand determines the depth of brand loyalty. Such loyalty is cultivated. *Name awareness*: whatever its origin, advertising, publicity, public festivals or special events, name awareness is likely to contribute to a greater use of place than it would for an obscure and unheard of location. *Perceived quality*: brands that are able to convince customers of their superior perceived quality often achieve higher profitability than rivals that are unable to do so. Accordingly, it is seen as the most important factor in determining the strength of a brand (Gale 1994). In turn, brand strength is nurtured by attribute brand associations, which are seen to determine the direction of brand "added value" (Riezebos 1994). Other proprietary brand assets include logos, packaging, particular human skills or patented designs. If these five dimensions are combined, their sum would provide the value of the brand.

Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) reviewed the multifaceted nature of country equity in relation to product-country images and their effects. They identified knowledge gaps and misconceptions that often impede the development of successful business or national strategies based on effective country branding. They concluded that country-based marketing is often underused or misdirected because of an inadequate understanding of the meaning of the term “country branding”. Therefore Papadopoulos and Heslop suggests several approaches for strategy development as well as pointing to knowledge gaps that call for additional research. Such research is justified, given the recurring theme in place marketing literature that traditional literature does not adequately accommodate the context specificity of places. In this regard, Urde *et al*. (2007) recognize the value of heritage, based on their study of monarchies as corporate brands. For evidence they refer to comparative dimensions such as “longevity”, the significance and extensive use of symbols, and brand stewardship to be vital elements of the organizational culture of modern constitutional monarchies. But the authors believe that there exists a key difference in motive between corporate branding and branding on behalf of the monarchy. The former is concerned with brand equity leveraging to boost shareholder value; but, in contrast, the latter seeks to apply branding to enhance the country’s social balance and core values.

Furthermore, this need is justified by the results of a study tested on two Slovenian markets, which reveals that brand equity differs between the markets according to customer-based evaluations, including the dimensions of awareness, quality and loyalty (Konecnik and Gartner 2007).

## FUTURE PLACE BRAND RESEARCH AGENDA

In recent years, the issue of place branding has received substantial attention. in both business and research. Indeed, the growing number of journal articles, books and conferences reflects the emphasis given to place-branding oriented research and publication. In the Age of Innovation, there are several works that stand out: first, the special issue on “nation branding” edited by Anholt (2002b); and second, *Beyond Branding* edited by Nicholas Ind (2003). In an unstable world, both help us to see beyond ourselves and understand the interdependent nature of human interaction, to develop knowledge in practice. The aftermath of the recent financial debacle calls for “renewal”; as echoed by the mantra of the 2010 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland: “the need to ‘rethink’, ‘redesign’ and ‘rebuild’ the world”, *Financial Times*, 26 January 2010, p. 2.

The twentieth century opened as the century of the nation-state, but closed with corporations as the most powerful actors on the global stage. Driven by processes such as globalization, individualization and the velocity of information, society entered a transitory phase from a vertical to a horizontal world. In the network society the complexity has increased significantly. As an underpinning force, demographic factors feed back into the process of economic growth and social progress, which in turn nurture the success of place brands. This has led Peter Drucker (1998) to claim: "The dominant factor for business in the next two decades, absent war, pestilence, or collision with a comet, is not going to be economics or technology. It will be demographics" (pp. 16–18). He might be right, especially when considering the following data: in 1900 14 percent of the world's population was urban, but some time in 2006 or 2007 it passed the 50 percent mark, and UN projections have put the world's city dwellers at 61 percent in 2030. The massive influx of new people arriving in the world's cities, estimated at 70 million per year, cause the world's leading cities, from Los Angeles to Moscow, London, Mumbai and Tokyo to become increasingly congested and lose their absolute cost advantages. Within the global system, this leads in turn to rivalry from second- and third-tier cities. Stephen Little (in Chapter 9 in this volume) illustrates how, for example, regions adjacent to the Union capital, Delhi – Gurgaon and Noida, face competition from smaller innovative clusters in Pune and Hyderabad. National direct investment requires a presence and appropriate image in the national and international consciousness of potential inward investors and migrants. However, for many of the Indian cities, achieving any prominence – like the Bangalore brand – within or outside their country is problematic.

Moreover, this major issue of demographic acceleration is exacerbated by other big challenges facing us, such as climate change, global recession and violent extremism. Simon Anholt (Chapter 2 in this volume) notes that these challenges may be different, but "have one thing in common: none of them can be tackled in conventional ways". Aram Eisenschitz (Chapter 3 in this volume) argues that the recession and the governments' rescue strategies bring about deep political change and, inevitably, changes in the governance and economic strategies of the cities. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that the type of place marketing that has been seen since the 1980s will continue.

The impact of modern information and communications technologies allow for spontaneous, digitalized-mediated interactions of global proportions. These have influenced the attitudes and values of people as employees, consumers and citizens. For example, Joshua Fouts (Chapter 11 in this volume) reports how the application of Twitter, which allows for asynchronous messaging and public viewing on the web, available to millions, goes beyond earlier territorialized conceptions of social space.

Social media enable remote and scattered employees, consumers and citizens to respond more effectively to "crisis" situations. These render, on the one hand, the debate about the question of which authority is better, government or business, increasingly meaningless. But, on the other hand, they underline the lack of responsiveness rooted in the problem of bureaucracy, and the need to develop analyses, that go beyond social-space-based conceptions such as "global–local" or "urban–rural."

How can we make sense of where we are in the complex and uncertain world in which place brands perform? Research and methodology are important anchors to enable us to understand where the subject of place branding has been, is at present, and where it may be heading in the future.

Our review suggests that place brands increasingly become embedded in a network of relationship with suppliers, customers and other business partners. These networks are no longer realized only in the "real" world, but also in the virtual world as well. For example, Ulla Hakala, Arja Lemmetyinen and Juergen Gnoth (Chapter 6 in this volume) chronicle how the Nokia slogan has impacted on the Finnish people and subsequently brought about the coevolution of a commercial brand positioning statement resulting in the branding of Finland. One of the key future challenges is to manage the identity and position of the place brand in an active way (Aaker 2004). Marc Fetscherin and Pascal Marmier (Chapter 10 in this volume) describe, for example, how swissnex Boston acts as a physical and virtual environment, and brings about a collective understanding and appreciation among members from academia, industry and society in a trust-based "commons". This public–private partnership affords the sharing of accumulated knowledge across borders and has fostered closer ties between Switzerland and New England/Eastern Canada.

Despite the new order that technology bestows on the world and business, society is still grappling with many of the same issues of poverty, class division and diminishing civic engagement: the list is in many ways similar to the list one could have drawn up a hundred years ago. Based on their extensive and longitudinal analysis of international news content, Roland Schatz and Christian Kolmer (Chapter 13 in this volume) indicate that nearly half of all foreign news coverage reports convey negative messages. Without an appropriate set-up for communication strategies to put a place brand successfully on the radar of the international media the overall perception of the former could be damaged.

How can ICTs be brought to bear on these and other issues that have an impact on how people communicate, learn, conduct business, make decisions and live? There is still a great deal of work to be done, suggest Govers and Go (Chapter 12 in this volume) to realize the promise that technology holds to enhance place brands, both off- and online. Place brand strategy should, where appropriate, leverage unique resources such as landscape, climate, heritage, local competencies and technologies as a way to win the hearts and minds of a global audience and stakeholders. This should lead to a conversation and co-creation of place identities, imagination and the maintenance of a competitive place brand advantage.

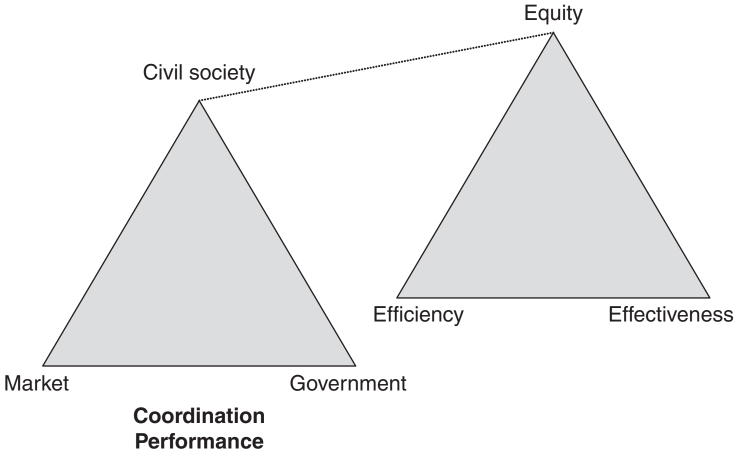
Such conversation and co-creation of place identities may indeed be structured as “area brands” and registered as collective intellectual property, and their properly designed protection could, compared to individual property, act as a source of innovation and schemes to induce virtuous development. This could tie together local suppliers around shared values, a symbolic reference, local creative knowledge and material cultural styles, suggest Antonio Russo and Giovanna Segre (Chapter 14 in this volume). A number of issues stand out for managers within the area of development and application of technology in the place brand context. Most are related to speed, as internet-related networks are being formed and abandoned at a rapid pace. This has an impact on every phase in the process of partnering. In particular, in the New Age of Innovation it raises the issue of whether virtual communities of partners contribute by adding attraction to the export brands through “country-of-origin” effects. An analysis of almost 450 tourism websites (Wijk *et al*., Chapter 15 in this volume) representing Rwanda, Uganda and Mozambique indicates that there is a substantial foreign involvement in Africa’s online tourism marketing structure; furthermore, that the current projected images tend to reproduce foreign stereotypes. So it is important to note that network membership simultaneously enables and restricts (Ford *et al*. 2003, p. 23). Furthermore, African (and other poor) nations should source indigenous cultural attributes, both high and low, in a context of both past and contemporary features to represent their culture as an indivisible part of their nation brand (Anholt 2002b, p. 233).

In the New Age of Innovation, in “conditions of seemingly pertinent discontinuity and interactivity” (Govers and Go 2009, p. 7) place brands afford the knowledge-based society perspectives beyond the corporation. However, there are substantial challenges to be faced and it is important to articulate branding devices in a manner that is seen to be relevant. Landry (2006) gives two examples where marketing slogans raise expectations and can serve as mechanisms to focus strategy on reducing the gap between hype and reality. First, “Kakegawa in Japan, Edmonton in Canada and Adelaide in Australia all seek to project . . . ” the image of an educated city; and second, a cluster of cities involving Zurich, Basle, Karlsruhe and Freiburg seek to compete on “a quality of life agenda driven by sustainable development” (Landry 2006, p. 157). Landry goes on to cite Parnes (1992) who has referred to the latter as “an exaggerated push for change.” In the place branding context, such a push for change may be likened to the famous “I have a dream” speech made in 1963 by Martin Luther King, Jr. Would his words have had any effect on society if he had said: “I have a strategy”?

However, place branding innovation processes build on the activities of multidisciplinary teams, and involve, beside dreaming – thinking, daring, deciding and doing (Halemane *et al.*, in Chapter 16 in this volume). For a place brand to be compelling, its value proposition needs to include a "dream." Here, the heritage of place (Go *et al.* 2003), representation of culture – specifically local assets and values of the host country/city – provide ample space to manage actively the place branding identity and position. Simultaneously, however, the dream needs backing up with deeds – that is, "here" and "there" remain central elements of the human condition. Managing the discontinuous and the "steady state" in a knowledge-based economy has an impact on place brands and poses challenges, such as maintaining relevance, creating a fitting value position, avoiding visible negatives, making the brand identity emerge, and managing the brand across contexts (Aaker 2004, p. 16). Contributions in this volume examine place branding across contexts ranging from the USA, the Middle East, Europe and India.

At present, the place branding field is in the pre-paradigmatic stage as well as being in search of an appropriate paradigm. In this quest, we have chosen to follow a structural instead of an analytical approach. While the latter has the merit of providing a detailed kind of benchmarking of documented contributions to the field of place branding, it also limits the coverage. For example, it is likely to cause myopia: the risk of not seeing the proverbial forest for the trees. Places are mobile and rooted, real and fake, inhabited by both insiders and outsiders (Minca and Oakes 2006). The synthesis approach followed in this volume is justified, because creating competitive advantage depends on resolving strategy paradoxes (Witt and Meyer 1999). And such paradoxes abound in a distributed network environment, in which place brands operate. And the emphasis shifts from an approach that determines what customers need and demand, manipulated to one in which networks of customers and producers jointly create value. The defining shift in market structure aimed at a greater sense of "balanced centricity" (Gummesson 2006) requires place brand managers gain a more sophisticated grasp of how to grow, collectively, potential innovation through smart "coordination" of government, market and civil society to achieve balanced-centric performance in terms of equity, efficiency and effectiveness (see Figure I.1). To move toward an advanced version of the place branding process and respond to the challenges of the times requires first the anchoring of brand-building activities in the place identity (Govers and Go 2009); and second, founding marketing functions, properly within an integrated partnership (Borg 2008; Braun 2008) so as to achieve a place brand performance that is not only profitable, but above all enhances livability. In this regard, Abu Dhabi's Tourism Development and Investment

**FIGURE I.1** **Model of balanced centricity as priority for future place branding**



*Source*: Based on Van Tulder, 1999, p. 25.

Company (TDIC) and Anantara set an appropriate example of a balanced development perspective: concern for the environment, preservation of heritage sites and ecological areas in the positioning of the Desert Island Resort and Spa (Reitsma and Little, Chapter 8 in this volume).

To understand paradoxes, find answers to place brand puzzles, and in search of a paradigm, we embarked on a journey, together with a group of contributors. These contributors gracefully accepted our invitation to explore how “disruptive innovation” is likely to cause both the deconstruction and construction of the place branding process. Their ideas are captured in this volume’s three parts.

Part 1 includes a set of chapters by established thinkers, who provide principles-based multidisciplinary perspectives and accounts of the dynamic factors that should cause the relation between place and branding process to change. The diffusion of innovation and creativity represent key sources of wealth creation and well-being of place. Each author addresses, within the framework of the Yearbook, a key contemporary theme that sheds new light via an exemplary combination of theory and one (or a combination) of the main institutions, tools or major environmental forces that affect the place formation process and, by extension, place branding.

Part 2 reveals how individual countries, regions and cities create and sustain an ongoing constructive advantage, looking for ways to approach a key question: how can decision-makers enhance the expression of creativity in the place context and develop potential innovation with cooperation-based "dreams", also known as strategies.

Part 3 consists of chapters on particular themes that explain how decision-makers can build those capabilities and skills that contribute to improving processes and, in turn, place-branding practice from an innovation and creativity perspective.

# ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

This Yearbook is organized into three sections and contains sixteen individual chapters. A brief description of each section and each chapter follows.

## PART I MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

This section consists of five chapters and forms an introductory section to the Yearbook that looks at the place branding phenomenon from different disciplinary perspectives. Its aim is to gather innovative thoughts that hold the potential to contribute to advancing the field of place branding.

### Chapter 1 An Organizational Perspective on Space and Place Branding

Stewart R. Clegg and Martin Kornberger examine, from a postmodern viewpoint, how place branding is linked inextricably with the production of meaning, the interpretations of different groups, and their struggle to legitimate dominant readings. Hence the authors express their scepticism with regard to those brand manuals that might have a complexity and anxiety-reducing function for city brand managers but are otherwise of little value. They present the branding of places and spaces as an opportunity to do something more profound – to rethink the relations between the politics of space and the various publics engaged in it. They draw on Benedict Anderson's argument (1983) on imagined communities to provide a hint as to how this might be considered. In the nineteenth century, in many places that were emerging as spaces with an identity as a nation, the identity of these could only be assembled through forms of representation.

The chapter concludes with the suggestion that perhaps in the new market environment of competition between nations and cities, new imagined communities might form around brands; for better or worse, they might become new meaning systems around which we organize ourselves as the public.

### Chapter 2 A Political Perspective on Place Branding

Simon Anholt argues that, since the advance of globalization, national image and reputation have become ever more critical assets in the modern world. Attempts to enhance these assets are sometimes pursued by governments under the heading of “nation branding” – all too often a naïve, ineffectual and wasteful application of commercial marketing techniques – and sometimes in a narrow and primitive form of public diplomacy. However, new forms of public diplomacy and a more sophisticated approach to nation branding or “competitive identity” can work together to help create prosperity, improve international relations and ultimately address some of the “grand challenges” of our age.

## Chapter 3 Place Marketing as Politics: The Limits of Neoliberalism

Aram Eisenschitz continues the theme that place marketing of cities tends to be seen as a pragmatic as opposed to a political activity aiming to bring prosperity to localities. He writes from an academic perspective and argues that place marketing is essentially a political activity that demonstrates different political settlements through its impact on cities. The political shift to neoliberalism ended the postwar social democratic settlement and ushered in a new era for place marketing. That era, however, has come to an end, in part because of the current economic crisis, which has discredited neoliberalism and with it the patterns of growth developed during the boom. If place marketing is a means of symbolizing different political settlements then the politics that emerge out of this crisis will produce another type of place marketing.

## Chapter 4 Knowledge Theory Perspectives on Place Branding

David Snowden has written this chapter from a practitioner’s perspective within the Cynefin framework, which gives decision–makers a structure, including new tools and techniques, to support the process of choice making in the complex domain of place branding, in contrast to the ordered system-setting of the past. He divides domains of decision–making into those that are simple (everyone can see what is the right thing to do); those that are complicated (it takes analysis or expertise to decide); and those that are complex or chaotic, which require an experimental approach and new abductive research techniques. Within the Cynefin model, this chapter emphasizes the need to approach place brand decision–making through the complex domain. David Snowden explores a series of domains in which place brands operate and pinpoints the domain of disorder: the state of not knowing which system you are in, which is thus considered a generally dangerous place. This chapter provides illustrations of the general approaches to strategic and tactical marketing in each of the domains presented. In full strategic use, the model is defined in the context of the marketing issue (aspects of all domains will be present) and it is then used to determine the research method in use. The chapter concludes with an outline of the micro-narrative method as an effective means to both understand place branding within an increasingly complex domain, and to apply mini-scenarios, giving decision–makers a sense of where they are in the complex and changing world of place branding.

### Chapter 5 Country Images: Why They Influence Consumers

In this chapter, Peeter W. J. Verlegh discusses the academic and managerial relevance of country-of-origin effects, and provides an overview of the psychological mechanisms underlying it. The general focus of the chapter is on the well-documented impact of product origin on consumer product evaluations. This chapter is also written from an academic perspective and suggests that several types of influence have been described in the literature. He goes on to state that there is strong empirical support for the effect, and there are several reasons why the effect is relevant to practice. Country of origin not only has a direct influence on consumer product evaluations, but also moderates the impact of other marketing variables, such as advertising. The main value of this article lies in its concise presentation of the most important aspects of the country-of-origin effect, and its focus on the evaluative dimensions of images in case studies to illustrate how country-of-origin can be used by marketers.

## PART II INDIVIDUAL PLACE CASE STUDIES

The chapters in Part 2 reveal how individual countries, regions and cities attempt to create and sustain a competitive advantage. Authors in this section examine how place brands can join forces – for example, through partnerships, apply analysis to gain an insight into residents' perceptions, share knowledge and technologies, or preserve heritage and ecology to create differentiation in response to the key question of how to maintain competitiveness.

### Chapter 6 Case A: The Role of Nokia in Branding Finland: Companies as Vectors of Nation Branding

Ulla Hakala, Arja Lemmetyinen and Juergen Gnoth write from an academic perspective. Many people around the world know the slogan "Nokia – 'connecting people' ". Cell phones certainly do connect people, whether made by Nokia or any other manufacturer, and this chapter moves beyond the singular corporate Nokia perspective. In particular, it addresses the relationship between Nokia and the Finnish nation-state. Through a case study format, the authors explore the influence the Nokia slogan has had on the Finnish people, and chronicle subsequently how the co-evolution of a commercial brand-positioning statement also resulted in the branding of Finland. The authors claim that Nokia's slogan also has another, deeper meaning: at its best, the success of the company strengthens the national identity and increases self-respect among the Finns. The chapter discusses the potential role of an individual company in branding a nation. In particular, it affords decision–makers an understanding of how to leverage this unique phenomenon by co-creating national brand identity, enhancing the national image and communicating its core competencies.

### Chapter 7 Case B: Branding Nonmetropolitan Illinois – A Normative Decision Analysis

This chapter is by Adee Athiyaman and Christopher D. Merrett, who write from an academic perspective. They apply a normative decision analysis to the branding of the case of a nonmetropolitan area of the state of Illinois. They highlight that branding nonmetropolitan Illinois involves recognizing what is perceived by the market, not necessarily "what is". While the perceptual analysis offers insight into branding rural Illinois, it also possesses limitations: their analysis is confined to existing residents. They present evidence that if the interest is in attracting new residents or visitors, then the approach has to be extended to include potential residents or visitors to rural Illinois. The chapter concludes by recommending that the approach they employed should be used for various target groups such as "the young", and "the elderly" who are potential residents or visitors.

### Chapter 8 Case C: Creating Desert Islands – Abu Dhabi

Written from an architect's practitioner perspective by Geert Reitsma and Stephen E. Little, this chapter focuses on a case study of Abu Dhabi's Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC) and hospitality operator Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas. In particular, the chapter discusses the challenges TDIC faces in developing a large-scale realty project, both in physical terms and in terms of the place branding process. It contrasts Dubai's large-scale development with Abu Dhabi's more balanced development perspective, particularly with regard to the latter's concern for the environment. The preservation of heritage sites and ecological areas are vital elements for sharing knowledge and positioning the Desert Islands, among residents and tourists alike, as an exclusive, sustainable ecotourism place brand. TDIC and Anantara have opted to use a dedicated website and extensive advertising program to project the brand image of the Desert Island Resort and Spa. Unlike physical goods such as the resort itself, virtual images can be diffused endlessly and rapidly to other places. However, the authors argue that the virtual image of the Desert Island Resort and Spa is years ahead of its actual development, a situation that has created false expectations among the public. The authors hope, in particular, that the discussion of a balanced brand approach, as illustrated by this chapter, will provide useful insights into the need to fuse the physical and virtual worlds to bridge the gap between visitor expectation and experience, thereby avoiding potential, undesirable brand misrepresentation.

### Chapter 9 Case D: In the Shadow of Bangalore – Place Branding and Identity for Chennai

This chapter, by Stephen E. Little, is also written from an academic perspective. He points to 270 Chinese cities that each count more than one million population, against India's 23 cities with such a population. With a lower level of urbanization, the larger Indian cities enjoy more prominence, but are still find themselves in an increasingly competitive framework, as can be seen from Chennai's role as the smallest top-tier city, with growing competition from second-tier Bangalore and Hyderabad. As a conurbation of some 7.6 million and the administrative capital of a state of 66 million, the task of branding Chennai is similar to that of branding a medium-sized country, and to secure the objectives set out by Gnoth (2002), a brand portfolio is required. In this respect the policies for Chennai must draw on the national brand while capturing the local elements from within its location. For the city of Chennai to maximize its profile it needs to map brand elements both between levels and against the audiences at the city brand level. To do so, a space between the audiences similar to the policy space created between alternative futures in scenario planning can be mapped, to see which audiences need to be engaged by different sectors and related initiatives. The chapter concludes with a trial mapping of key elements of Chennai's cultural and economic assets.

### Chapter 10 Case E: Public–Private Partnership to Foster Science, Higher Education and Innovation – The Case of Switzerland with swissnex Boston

Written by Pascal Marmier and Marc Fetscherin from a practitioner's perspective, this is a first-hand account of the creation and evolution of swissnex, a global network of science and technology outposts run by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research in cooperation with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. In the chapter, the authors describe the history of swissnex and the challenges it has surmounted. In addition, the chapter outlines the mission, organizational structure and interaction with other Swiss semi-public or public organizations, as well as the key initiatives and successes of swissnex Boston in the past decade. The Public–Private Partnership swissnex Boston acts as a physical and virtual environment but has succeeded in maintaining a trust-based "commons" where members can share their accumulated knowledge. This approach has fostered closer ties between Switzerland and New England/Eastern Canada and brought academia, industry and society closer together.

## PART III THE FUTURE EVOLUTION OF PLACE BRANDING

The New Age of Innovation presses stakeholders to harness technologies that transform everyday lives, and the tools and skills that humankind employs in practice. Managing place branding under conditions of "disruptive innovation" changes the meaning of place branding, turns hierarchies on their heads and nurtures decentralizing and flexible forms of organization. People make a place. People power propels a place forward. Hence place branding organizations should seek to mine people power through inclusive strategies. How much energy and creativity might be harnessed if members of a place community were to feel socially included?

### Chapter 11 Social Media and Immersive Worlds: Why International Place Branding Doesn't Get Weekends Off

This chapter is written by Joshua S. Fouts from a practitioner's perspective, and focuses on the use of emergent social and new media toward a new global culture and economy in the Imagination Age. The chapter opens with a reference to the purported first-ever Twitter press conference held on 30 December 2008 and concerning the conflict in the Gaza Strip between Israel and Palestinian militants. The conference was the brainchild of David Saranga, Israel's Consul for Media and Public Affairs in New York City. Saranga was no stranger to innovative approaches to branding and outreach. The author contrasts the overwhelming success, both in terms of media attention and dialogue of the Twitter press conference with less successful cases of applying Twitter as an asynchronous messaging tool to make Twitter pages publicly viewable on the internet, and thus available to millions. In this chapter, the author focuses on how technology and social media tools are evolving at a pace that often far exceeds the agility or comfort level of standard government pace and practice, and how social media afford remote and distributed actors to respond to "crisis" situations. Often the biggest problem in responsiveness to incorporating these tools is within the bureaucracy itself.

The chapter concludes with four points that can aid decision–makers to overcome the bias popularly expressed against the potential of new social media tools.

## Chapter 12 The E-branding of Places

This chapter offers another set of guidelines with a strong practical orientation. Robert Govers and Frank M. Go write from a perspective that is one of both a practicing consultant and an academic. They show how technological developments can leverage novel opportunities for practice organizations to implement competitive place brand strategies. The chapter examines the key factors involved in cultivating Web 2.0, cross-medial branding campaigns and online brand experience management. All play a key role to bring about a fusion between the virtual – and physical worlds. In a globalized world, places increasingly project their unique identities through place brands, both off- and online. Where appropriate, real place branding strategies seek to identify unique resources such as landscape, climate and heritage, local competencies gain support and establish roles, including development, ongoing facilitation and technology support to sustain a differential competitive place brand advantage.

The chapter concludes with an innovative practice case. It holds a lesson to win the hearts and minds of a global audience and leverage technologies in a way that involves stakeholders in a conversation, leading to a co-creation of place identities, experiences and imagination.

## Chapter 13 News Coverage of Foreign Place Brands: Implications for Communication Strategies

Roland Schatz and Christian Kolmer write from a practitioner's perspective. They build their arguments on their longitudinal research at the Zurich-based Media Tenor Institute, which since 1994 has specialized in analyzing international news content continuously and consistently. Their extensive research has proved the validity of the agenda-setting theory in several areas of life, ranging from politics to business and the sector of NGOs. This chapter explores the way that American, British, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Swiss, Arabic, Turkish, South African and Chinese

TV report news about foreign places in terms of the volume and tone of coverage as well as the topics addressed. Highlighting some issues and neglecting others may affect media coverage and public opinion. Almost half of all foreign news coverage reports convey negative messages and can potentially affect the overall perception of place brands. The chapter concludes with the suggestion that the set-up for communication strategies can help to put a place brand successfully on the radar of the international media.

## Chapter 14 Place Branding and Intellectual Property

Antonio P. Russo and Giovanna Segre continue the theme of innovation. Writing from an academic perspective, they discuss the value and uses of cultural brands in the development of places as tourist destinations. They observe that "mobility" is the overarching paradigm of social and economic organization and the most appropriate framework for social science in the era of mobility. Also, they suggest that the type of development that takes place in a destination is to a large extent determined by the allocation strategies of property rights. Consequently, they argue that collective intellectual property rights and their properly designed protection could be useful as a source of innovation as well as schemes to induce virtuous development trajectories, as opposed to individual property. Such collective intellectual property may indeed be structured as "area brands", tying together local suppliers around shared values and a symbolic reference to the respect and furthering of local creative knowledge and material cultural styles. For example, the Appellation of Origin (AO) is a special kind of geographical indication, used on products that have a specific quality that is exclusively or essentially a result of the geographical environment in which the products are created or produced.

The chapter concludes that such institutional arrangement has the potential to bring forward tools for creating an understanding of how innovation, favoring the orientation of the local tourist market to trust and cooperation are interrelated and likely to lead to clever engineering of the best place branding strategy to achieve sustainable economic development through tourism.

## Chapter 15 Website Analysis: Brand Africa

This chapter, by Jeroen van Wijk, Frank M. Go and Robert Govers, is written from an academic perspective. It explores whether websites that offer a global audience virtual access to the beauty of African nations provide opportunities for innovation and diminish their international isolation as place brands. The analysis examines a sample of almost 450 tourism websites representing Rwanda, Uganda and Mozambique. Two aspects are studied in particular: the websites' technical and social infrastructures, including website ownership and networks, and the website content – that is, the projected place images and opportunities to bridge the main supplier–consumer gaps in the global tourism value chain. The findings indicate that there is substantial foreign involvement in Africa's online marketing infrastructure; furthermore, that the current projected images tend to reproduce foreign stereotypes. It concludes that the potential for upgrading innovative branding capabilities could be sourced in indigenous African cultural attributes, from both high and low culture, and in contexts of both the past and the present.

## Chapter 16 Orchestrating the Innovation Process of Place Branding

This chapter by Murthy Halemane, Felix Janszen and Frank M. Go is written from a practitioner's perspective. It examines place branding as a dynamic process, which requires continuous personality or brand building development practices for place brand positioning purposes. From the innovation perspective, the practice of place branding has much to gain from innovative enterprise branding. It distinguishes between service providers and service consumers' activities, and identifies the voice of the consumer and the building of strong relationships among service providers as prerequisites for undertaking innovation. These activities are translated into values related to properties, or attributes for analysis. Subsequently, the authors use ranking as a means, first, to benchmark a place with respect to other competing places; and second, to focus on priority attributes that underpin place uniqueness and increase its competitive position. The chapter concludes with a case study of Mysore City, India, which illustrates vividly the important role a selected place heritage brand plays in orchestrating the innovation process.

# PART I

# Multidisciplinary Perspectives

## CHAPTER 1

# An Organizational Perspective on Space and Place Branding

*Stewart R. Clegg & Martin Kornberger*

## INTRODUCTION

Today, it is commonplace to say that we live in what has been called a society of organizations (Perrow 1991), one in which questions of power and control exercised by organizations become crucial. One consequence of this is the ubiquity of theories of organization that focussed on what economists had glossed as the "firm" – without really attending too much to what actually transpired within the great variety of organizations that this term might cover – as well as those many organizations that it might not cover. Economics was interested in the idea of a free market. Initially, the firm was seen as the home of hierarchy – the alternative to markets (Williamson 1975). But the more society, economics and organizations were studied, the greater became the gloss on what occurred within the firm: to accommodate networks, alliances, communities of practice, human and non-human assemblages, rhizomes … until the idea of free market exchange became the exception, not the norm. This shift in perspective has important implications: free market models, known as neoclassical economics, implied that rational actors made decisions based on economic calculations. The social and the political were eliminated from the economic, as well as the cognitive, limits that produce "bounded rationality" (Simon 1982). Against the sterility of the models thus produced, organization theory, which began its career fixated on bureaucracy, developed various antithetical models. Central to all of these are notions of nonnecessity and of choice.

Historically, these choices were exercised in terms of the rational models captured by Max Weber in the theory of bureaucracy. In organization theory, from Weber (1978) onwards, there was a general awareness that rule-based coordination operates as a form of social and political control. Rules, however flexible they may be, structure actions and interactions. In other words, organizations would cease to exist if no power was exercised.

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Hence, power and organization are mutually constitutive concepts. In other words, with the study of organizations, the social and the political (with a small s and a small p) enter theories of economic production, consumption and exchange.

The high water mark of the bureaucratic conception of organization design was probably the 1960s. Since then, bureaucracies have been under various kinds of attack. One consequence of this is that a specifically bureaucratic model of organization can no longer be taken for granted: to be as it is demands choice – increasingly it is evident that an organization chooses to be what it is. To say that organizations make choices is a better way of describing our current realities than to stress only the choices that individuals make. For example, it is not just people who pollute the environment on a large scale but also organizations. Although there is a long tradition of liberalism that privileges individual subjects and their choices, increasingly these choices are organizationally constructed and constrained.

The grounds for choice have often been constructed in terms of dichotomies. Organization theory has long been characterized by a dichotomy between conceptions of organization as bureaucracy and various conceptions of its antithesis. One thinks of mechanistic versus organic organizations (Burns and Stalker 1962), modern versus postmodern organizations (Clegg 1990), and so on. These dichotomies – and they are recurrent in the literature – articulate around different conceptions of social and political relations in organizations. On the one hand, there are the models of formal organization, which stress standardization, routinization, formalization, hierarchization, centralization and related concepts. We might think of these as hard power models – where power is formally fixed in definite relations provided by the model. The antithesis stresses soft power, fluidity and organicism, creating organizations that are more flexible and accommodating of ambiguities, uncertainties and tensions.

## LIQUID SPACE AND MATERIAL SPACE

In the past, cities tended to be managed in a highly bureaucratic manner. Local councils collected local taxes of one sort or another and delivered standardized bureaucratic services to the residents. Increasingly, however, cities are becoming more organically managed, with strategic visions and missions supplementing the bureaucratic service delivery model in order to create a sense of identity with place. In recent times, one of the strategic choices that city managers and organization designers of various kinds have had to face is how to position the city that houses them as something distinctive, marketing it as a place worth living in or visiting.

In the present era of liquid modernity (Bauman 2000), when people are extremely mobile as citizens, tourists, employees and residents, organizations increasingly seek to brand themselves. Brands offer short-cuts to cognition and sensemaking. They are especially useful as parts of organizations become less hard, taking on more fluid, liquid forms. As design is increasingly prevalent as a way of defining who we are in terms of the collectives that organize us, whether these are political parties, social networks or formal organizations, the questions of strategic choice become ever more prevalent. Strategic choices in and around cities – both in terms of their management as well as that of other organizations associated with them – similarly increase.

Studying space and place branding in the context of organizations that are liquid in terms of their identity but fixed materially in particular places and spaces implies an understanding of how organizations, including design firms, city administrations, professional associations such as urban planners, brand consultancies and others, deploy branding, and how brands have an impact on internal and external power relations. Take, for example, the work that is done to produce an image of an organization or a city as a specific entity, with a definite character, ethos and other qualities of identity that act as its signature. A signature reflects identity but it also constitutes a sense of unity and homogeneity that exists in the signature but not necessarily in the signified. Buildings, such as Norman Foster's Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, play with the tension between signified and signature, inviting authorities (in this case "starchitect" Norman Foster) to put their weight behind the signature.[1]

## BRANDS

The concept of the brand has branded itself rather well: brands are a valuable, ubiquitous and pervasive phenomenon. Brand league tables, such as the one produced by Interbrand, rate top brands as more valuable assets of organizations than all other corporate assets combined.[2] While we have to be careful to understand league tables as symptoms, and less as symbols, of reality, they none the less indicate an order of things that struggle for legitimacy. They are the corollary of the audit society (Power 1999): where things are ranked, the rankings become ways of signifying the value of what is being counted. In this sense, league tables have performative effects.

Brands are not only seen to be valuable, they have also proved to be extremely pervasive: from US presidents to cities, from universities to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), from nations to hospitals, the techniques of branding seem to be universally useful and valid. In fact, branding has hegemonic traits as it not only forms the basis of organizational communication and expression but also structures how those who resist it exercise their influence: for example, Fairtrade, Greenpeace, Adbusters, and all those other critical, often anti-capitalist, groupings that deploy the tools of branding to fight corporations. *No Logo* (Klein 2000) might turn out to be a particular powerful kind of logo, after all.

Brands are ubiquitous, rapidly extending their sphere of influence. Starting in 1924, when Stuart Davis created a piece of art with the brand *Odol* as subject matter, brands began to conquer cultural spaces. In many respects, pop art was the most visible sign of this merger between culture and commerce, facilitated by artists working icons into brands and art, such as Marilyn Monroe or the no less famous Campbell's Soup cans – Andy Warhol being the most famous exemplar of this. Today, street artist Banksy calls his or her work *brandalism*: an activity in which the artist uses graffiti and other forms of public expression to fight the world of branded communication. Brands are cultural manifestations, and cultural manifestations increasingly take the form and shape of brands: think of pop bands, films or contemporary artists such as Damien Hirst, who have become, first and foremost, successful brands. In this respect, branding has become a symptom of the aestheticization of the economy, and the commercialization of aesthetics, as lamented by Horkheimer and Adorno (1947). Given the value, ubiquitousness and pervasiveness of the phenomenon of brands, it was only a matter of time until space and place branding became institutionalized. And that happened swiftly: as the other contributions to this volume demonstrate, space and place branding is *en vogue*.

## THREE SUSPICIONS ABOUT BRANDS, PLACE AND ORGANIZATION

In what follows we want to put forward three propositions – or bearing in mind their speculative nature, perhaps we had better to call them three suspicions – about how branding might reorganize space and place.

First, brands have an impact on both external *and* internal audiences. Traditionally, brands have been rooted in marketing and have had a clear external focus. With the growth of knowledge-intensive and service-based industries, the brand has become an increasingly internal organizing device: think of a service firm in which the employees' behaviour is required to represent the brand. The culture and the brand co-evolve. In consequence, categories of production and consumption become confused: the latter becomes an interpretative activity that is creative in its own right. As de Certeau (1984) has shown, consumption, no matter how passive it is imagined to be, is an inherently productive activity. Liquid modernity, as Bauman (2000) argues, is moving toward an economy of qualities in which processes of production and consumption are increasingly intertwined (Callon *et al*. 2002).

The brand nowadays acts as an interface or medium between production and consumption. The brand eases circulation between production and consumption as new things with old resonances can be launched into the consumer orbit. For Simmel (1978), money was the most important medium of exchange, which he criticized because it transformed qualities into quantities. Brands reintroduce quality into the economy by creating a focus not only on the price but more especially on the value of things (Lury 2004). The concept of value deployed includes both original meanings of the word: the commercial value, but also a cultural value that is altogether less definable and difficult to quantify. Of course, at capitalism's outset, as Weber (1992) recognized, this entanglement was of considerable structural importance. While the cold logic of rationalization disenchanted the world, the regime of branding reintroduces intangible qualities into exchanges (Kornberger 2010).

These transitions have an important impact on place branding: as Wirth reminds us, cities were always media that facilitated exchange between heterogeneous elements:

> The city has thus historically been the melting pot of races, peoples, and cultures, and a most favourable breeding ground of new biological and cultural hybrids. It has not only tolerated but rewarded individual differences. It has brought together people from the ends of the earth *because* they are different and thus useful to one another, rather than because they are homogenous and like-minded. (Wirth 1969: 150)

Of course, such exchanges of peoples, cultures and the creation of hybridity are dangerous. Difference is what matters, but difference always implies the possibility of threatening the order of things, the architecture of the established status quo. The techniques of branding are a way of managing the city as a medium and controlling the production and circulation of meaning. People are invited to "be Berlin" or "I AMsterdam" – to identify, be passionate, creative and explore while simultaneously ensuring that one adds value as an economic subject in a city of economic subjects. In the cultural economy, where place becomes a resource for business, brands are a way of packaging this resource and offering it as a consumable for a global audience.

Brands do not fit into the convenient narrative that so much research uses as its blueprint: on the one had there is the world of those in power; while on the other there are those who resist. Brands are homogenous engines of diversity, as Askegaard (2006) put it. Brands need to find and identify differences, but by doing so they integrate them into a system and render them more anodyne. But this is not the same as projecting a homogenous meaning on to the world: brands need to be different; the dark alleys of the Bronx had to be exploited to find hip hop rather than the Brill building on Tin Pan Alley. In fact, homogeneity would equal a system failure.

To brand somewhere requires something to be positioned as elemental, definitive and different. A place gains its value through being a city of culture – but every year there is another city of culture! What makes Glasgow more distinctive as a city of culture than Linz? Is Liverpool defined by the Beatles? London had Carnaby Street in the 1960s: does that difference mean anything today? Once something is latched on to as the distinctive characteristic of a place, then the place is almost certain to become kitsch: the world is full of one-trick destinations such as Mecca, Lourdes, the Temple Bar district in Dublin, or Blackpool. Institutionalizing difference is a paradoxical activity: to be branded means commodifying an easily discernible difference; but once it has been branded as such it cannot help but become ossified, predictable, boring, stale – in a word, kitsch. Ironically, place branding could be described as one of those maneuvers destined to subvert what it creates because it gives its creation a name. In the case of branding, naming might equal taming.

Second, brands are socially constructed meaning systems. Brands are signs, and as such they need to be interpreted to become meaningful. Remember what Baudrillard (2003) said – that signs have no meaning unless we relate them to each other and to a grammar. The same applies to brands. The power of brands lies in their associations, and in the interpretations that people create. These interpretations might differ – Coke is a sign of freedom in China, a sign of globalization in Tonga, or a sign of national pride in the USA. Brands are in part constituted through the eyes of the beholder.

Place branding is inherently political because it always includes a struggle between a brand and its homogenous, silencing effects, and the overflowing, polyphonic reality of people's interpretations of a place. Take the brand of "Edinburgh", which attracts the global *flâneurs* and the high-end knowledge workers who understand the city as a backdrop to their lifestyles, and see events such as the Edinburgh Festival as an opportunity to recharge their batteries; at the same time, the Inspiring Capital brand writes Rebus, *Trainspotting* and other images of Edinburgh out of the representation.

Representation is always selective, and always entails a choice of what to focus on as well as what to ignore. Representation creates identity out of identities; it takes all the possible signs in the world and reduces them to a simple and unitary positioning, to an identity per se. Thus, when we say "Viva Las Vegas" we know, instantly, what is signified. The branding does that for us, even if Elvis does not. Through representation, a brand simultaneously creates belongingness and difference: brand is a marker of identity that allows a place to be different and at the same time to belong and identify. Simmel has described this phenomenon in terms of fashion or style which elevates *and* equalizes individuals, with style creating envy and approval simultaneously (see Kornberger 2010).

To enable things to be both different and the same is an important social function that brands manage to accomplish. Place branding is built on this mechanism: similar to fashion, it follows a trend. All successful place brands will differ in the identity they put forward, while positing the identity in identical ways. The problem is, however, that once an identity is perceived to be successful, it becomes an object for mimesis. Place branding often tilts towards imitation. All those creative cities in the UK try to be different but eventually become the same. Elsewhere we have discussed this as the identity paradox: being similar enough to be part of an industry (for example, coaching) but different enough to stand out from other industry players (Clegg *et al.* 2007). The brand is the discursive arena in which these struggles for identity take place.

Which brings us to the third and final point – brands are contested because diverse groups of stakeholders in the place (including local government, businesses, consumers, citizens, tourists, and so on) struggle over conflicting interpretations. Legally speaking, commercial brands are owned by organizations that hold the copyright over them, but who owns a city? Brands increasingly become a real object of desire when the signifier becomes more valuable than the signified: for example, Bradford in Yorkshire, UK is a mill town that has been in post-industrial decline for the best part of a century, with a brief period of prosperity during the Korean War, when the demand for wool increased markedly and many workers were imported from Pakistan to satisfy the demand for 24-hour shift working, seven days a week, at a time of full employment. Thus, Bradford has become a centre of Pakistan culture in the UK and brands itself as a tourist destination with attractions such as the National Media Museum and Cartwright Hall art gallery, as well as being the gateway to Brontë Country and the Dales. But, which signifier captures what audience? Mosques and Media probably segment the brand.

Similar to the argument from semiotics, we can say that brands are affirmed by their readers, not their authors. Meaning, like beauty, lies in the eyes of the beholder. Hence it is people who render brands meaningful. They make brands valuable: their activity of interpretation makes brands recognized. Conflicting interpretations – framed by their cultural, social and political contexts – are likely to give rise to different brand meanings. Hence, the meaning of brands becomes both a medium for expression of power relations and a source of power struggles.

Place branding is an arena for political (small p) struggles in which conflicting interpretations collide over what a specific somewhere signifies: the meaning of places will emerge out of conflicting interpretations and struggles over what can be constituted as legitimate readings. The limitations involved in manufacturing city brands thus becomes evident: think of Sydney, Australia's brand as a worldly and open city, not least because of its Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras festival, the biggest of its kind in the world. What is now an integral part of the Sydney brand was once a contested issue: when the first parade was held in 1978, the event was broken up by the police and all fifty-three marchers were arrested. However, for the residents of Sydney, being worldly and open does not signify the city so much as its being a place that lacks adequate public transport and suffers from choked roads: while the global brand is strong, its local meaning differs markedly, to say the least.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

As we have argued, place branding is inextricably linked with the production of meaning, the interpretations of different groups, and their struggle to legitimate dominant readings. Hence we would be skeptical with regard to those brand manuals that might have a complexity and anxiety-reducing function for city brand managers but are otherwise of little value. Branding places and spaces provides us with the opportunity to do something more profound – to rethink the relations between the politics of space, organizations, and the various publics engaged in both. Benedict Anderson's book (1983) on imagined communities provides a hint of how this might be considered. He argues that, in the nineteenth century, in many places that were emerging as spaces with an identity as a nation, their identity could only be assembled through forms of representation. There was no pre-existing identity. Identity had to be fabricated from the shared stories in newspapers as well as through a limited range of other symbols, such as flags, songs, having heads of state (sometimes inviting minor members of other states' royal families to come and be their monarch), or constitutions, which were often copied from elsewhere. Through all these devices of mimesis and representation, a heterogeneous mix of people could come to understand itself as "one", as a people. Today, perhaps, in the new market environment of competition between nations and cities, new imagined communities might form around brands – for better or worse, they might become new meaning systems around which we organize ourselves as a public.

## NOTES

1. From 1985, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank had been effectively branded by Norman Foster's corporate HQ building at 1 Queen Street, Hong Kong. The structure was modular and it was widely rumored that the building's design was adopted in order to enable it to be dismantled and moved if 1997 and the Chinese takeover proved too traumatic for the bank. As it transpired, the building stayed but the bank moved: the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank became HSBC and moved its corporate HQ to London. HSBC is a perfect image of a globalizing company in a global world: it brands itself as being at home anywhere. In twenty-five years it has morphed from being place-branded by a building to becoming an organic organization at home across the world. Most organizations are not quite as mobile as this example, or other examples have been, such as the transition of the Halifax Building Society from a staid bureaucracy dispensing mortgages to a Scottish financial institution – HBOS – situated several hundred miles north of its erstwhile origins.
2. See http://www.interbrand.com/best_global_brands.aspx.

## CHAPTER 2

# A Political Perspective on Place Branding

*Simon Anholt*

## INTRODUCTION

We live in a world where the consequences of intangibles have become frighteningly tangible. The big challenges facing us today – climate change, global recession and violent extremism, to name but three – are complex in nature, but clearly have one thing in common: none of them can be tackled in conventional ways. What George W. Bush dubbed the "war on terror" self-evidently cannot be won with conventional weapons because it is a battle of values and identity, played out in the media as much as on the battleground. Climate change cannot easily be slowed down with legal or fiscal solutions alone because it is an international problem that is intimately linked to people's lifestyles and behaviors. Recession is as much about consumer confidence as it is about toxic debt.

The real battlegrounds of today are ideas, values, beliefs, behaviors and perceptions. We humans have souls as well as bodies, and our behavior is influenced by both – often far more by the former than the latter.

The progress and prosperity of countries is no longer a matter of how much economic, military or political power each can wield: the destiny of most countries lies to a significant extent – and for some governments, to a terrifying extent – in the hands of international public opinion. Countries, cities and regions that are lucky or virtuous enough to have acquired a positive reputation find that everything they or their citizens wish to do on the global stage is easier: their image goes before them like a calling card which opens doors, creates trust and respect, and raises the expectation of quality, competence and integrity.

Places with a reputation for being poor, uncultured, backward, dangerous or corrupt will find that everything they or their citizens try to achieve outside their own neighborhood is harder, and the burden is always on their side to prove that they do not conform to the national stereotype. Compare

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the experiences of a Swedish and an Iranian manager on the international job market, or the struggles of an exporter from Bangladesh with one from Canada. Compare the ease with which a mediocre tourist resort in a highly regarded country can gain glowing media coverage and celebrity endorsement, with the difficulties experienced by an unspoiled and unique destination in a country with a weak or poor reputation. Compare the way consumers in Europe or America will willingly pay more for an unknown "Japanese" product than for an identical "Korean" product that is probably made in the same Chinese factory. Compare how positively the international media will report on an ordinary piece of policy from the government of a country reputed to be fair, rich and stable, with the media silence or sharp criticism that greets a wise, brave and innovative policy from a country that is saddled with a negative image.

When I started writing about these ideas, which I called "nation brand", in the mid-1990s, my original observation was a simple one: that the reputations of countries are analogous to the brand images of companies and products, and these reputations are equally critical to the progress and prosperity of those countries because of their influence on the opinions and behaviors of each country's "target audience" of foreign investors, tourists, consumers, students, entrepreneurs, trading partners, the media, other governments, donors, multilateral agencies and so on.

Places certainly have their brand images, but the extent to which they can *be branded* is, of course, another matter. The idea of a nation as a brand created much excitement in the public sector, thanks to the tantalizing but largely illusory prospect of a quick fix for a weak or negative national image. Even today, many governments, most consultants and even some scholars persist in a naïve and superficial notion of "place branding" that is nothing more than ordinary marketing and corporate identity, where the product just happens to be a country, a city or a region rather than a bank or a running shoe.

There is little or no evidence to suggest that such approaches can affect national image, and it is remarkable how many governments are prepared to spend large amounts of donors' and taxpayers' money on such campaigns without the support of any proper case studies – there are none in the literature and I have been publicly calling for them, or even some moderately persuasive arguments, since around the year 2000, but so far entirely in vain – and often without the most rudimentary success criteria or mechanisms for performance measurement.

In reality, the images of places appear to be remarkably stable, and highly resilient to deliberate manipulation. The Anholt–GfK Roper Nation Brands Index (NBI), which I launched in early 2005 to track and analyze the global images of up to fifty countries using a panel of 20,000–40,000 respondents in twenty to forty countries, shows that almost no country's image has changed by more than 1 or 2 percent during this period.

There have only been two exceptions to this remarkable inertia. The first was when Denmark's image collapsed in the predominantly Muslim countries surveyed, following the publication in 2006 of cartoons lampooning the Prophet Muhammad. In Egypt, for example, Denmark had typically been ranked around fifteenth overall, with a high ranking of seventh for its governance, but following the publication of the cartoons, both its governance and overall rankings dropped to thirty-fifth out of the thirty-nine countries then included in the study – and it has still not recovered its prestige today.

My conclusion at the time was that relevance is a more significant factor in national image than mere profile. Major events that take place in other countries may make the international news, but they will not strike people in other countries as especially relevant to their own lives, and consequently will not affect their deeply-rooted beliefs about that country. The cartoons were different because they were perceived as being relevant: many Muslims felt that "Denmark" had deliberately reached out to offend them, and their views of that country were utterly changed as a result.

The second, and even more remarkable, exception emerged when the 2009 NBI results were analyzed: America, which had languished at around seventh place since the survey was launched, had suddenly shot up to *first place* overall – and not just in the perceptions of one or two countries. This was its average rank among all twenty countries polled: for a sample representing some 60 percent of the world's population and 77 percent of its economy, America had suddenly become the most admired country on earth.

My only explanation for this extraordinary reversal in the fortunes of "Brand America" was that being first was America's *natural* position, and, like most nations and their images, it was tied to this position by a piece of very strong prejudicial elastic. It just happened that since 2005 (and no doubt before), a particularly dark phase of America's international relations had held it in an unnaturally low position. The arrival of President Obama – or, more accurately, the American electorate's decision to elect President Obama – served to release that strong elastic, and the USA simply snapped back into its accustomed position as the world's most admired country. (Interestingly, since the survey was launched, it had never departed from that position in the eyes of the Muslim respondents to the NBI.)

Part of the reason why national image is so stable, more of a fixed asset than a liquid currency, is because we all seem to need these comforting stereotypes which enable us to put countries in convenient pigeonholes, and will only abandon them if we really have no other choice. The relevance of foreign countries to most people is limited, and if a person in Spain or South Africa or India spends only a few minutes each year thinking about, say, Britain, it is not surprising if their perception of Britain remains largely unchanged for years on end. Images of foreign countries are truly part of the culture of the country that holds the perceptions: Japan's image in China, for example, is part of Chinese culture, and vice versa. National reputation truly cannot be constructed; it can only be earned, and imagining that such a deeply rooted phenomenon can be shifted by so weak an instrument as marketing communications is an extravagant delusion. As Socrates observed, "The way to achieve a better reputation is to endeavor to *be* what you desire to appear."

## WHERE NATIONAL IMAGES ORIGINATE

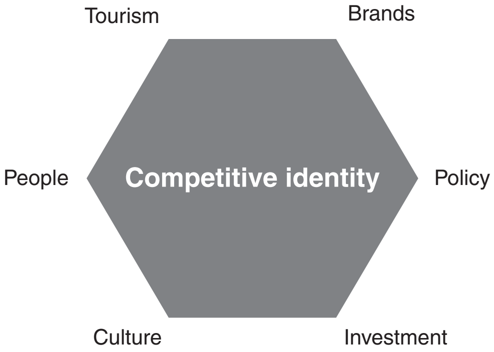
By accident more often than by design, most countries engage with the outside world, and thus create their image, through six basic areas of activity:

- Their tourism promotion, as well as people's first-hand experience of visiting the country as tourists or business travelers.
- Their exported products and services, which act as powerful ambassadors for each country and region when their place of origin is explicit.
- The policy decisions of the country's government, whether it is foreign policy that affects the "audience" directly, or domestic policy reported in the international media.
- To business audiences, the way that the country solicits inward investment, and the recruitment of foreign talent, labor and students.
- Through cultural exchange, cultural exports and sport.
- The people of the region themselves: politicians, media and sports stars as well as the population in general; how they behave when abroad; and how they treat visitors to their country.

For clarity, I originally mapped these "natural" channels of communication as the points of a hexagon (see Figure 2.1).

The basic theory of nation brand, or, as I prefer to call it, "competitive identity", is that if a country's leadership has a good, clear, believable idea of what the place really is and what it stands for, and manages to coordinate the policies, strategies, investments, actions, behaviors and communications

**FIGURE 2.1 The hexagon of competitive identity**



*Source*: © Simon Anholt 2002.

of all six points of the hexagon to reinforce this message, then it stands a better chance of building and maintaining a powerful and positive internal and external reputation.

## NATION BRANDING OR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY?

Today it seems as if every place on earth wants to manage its reputation, even if there is little consistency in the language used to describe the task. The way many governments speak about their public diplomacy (PD) objectives sounds like nothing more than a decorous euphemism for nation branding of the most primitive, sector-specific, communications-oriented type. Ministries of state prefer not to use words such as "brand", but national or sectoral brand management is precisely what many of them are attempting – and generally failing – to perform.

When I coined the phrase "nation brand" in 1996, I intended the discipline to consider how the nation *as a whole* behaves, interacts, presents and represents itself to other nations, whereas what most countries call public diplomacy concentrates exclusively on the presentation of national policy to the foreign public. Policy is simply one point of the "hexagon" of nation brand, so this "primitive" PD is a weak subset of the whole, a diplomatic monologue where the interlocutor happens to be society at large rather than other diplomats.

It is easy to see why governments are attracted by the idea of branding. Admiring glances have often been cast by the public sector at the creativity, speed, efficiency and lack of ceremony with which companies appear to be able to hire and fire, restructure, reinvent themselves, build and implement strategies, raise and spend capital, develop new products and get them to market, respond to competition, and react to disasters. What really impresses politicians, as they struggle to squeeze a few extra votes from an increasingly apathetic electorate, is the apparent ability of certain companies to shape public discourse, to manipulate their own images at will, and to inspire unwavering respect, loyalty, even love for their brands. (This power is partly imaginary: companies find it easier to be popular with their audiences simply because they are offering something those audiences actually want to buy.)

Happily, this narrow interpretation of public diplomacy as a subtype of nation branding is not the end of the story. Other varieties of PD are more concerned with broader and longer-term effects, and the following framework describes the main currents in operation since the late 1950s.

## Type I Public Diplomacy

This is really a type of public relations, and it is how the discipline was originally practiced in the USA after the Second World War. PD officers were charged to "sell" whatever policies the administration chose to implement, as characterized in a comment from one US government official to a PD officer: "Look, you just forget about policy, that's not your business; we'll make the policy and then you can put it on your damn radios."

When the purpose of PD is simply to promote government policies, it is likely to be superfluous or futile, depending on the good name of the country and its government at that particular time. If the country is generally seen in a favorable light, then any policy that is not patently wrong-headed is likely to be well received and simply needs to be communicated clearly; and little art or skill are required to do this. If, on the other hand, the country suffers from a poor or weak reputation, then almost no amount of skill or money will ensure that policy is received with enthusiasm; it will either be ignored or taken as further proof of whatever evil is currently ascribed to the country.

The argument is ultimately a circular one: a country cannot improve its image except by pursuing good policies, but policies may not be perceived as good unless the country has a good image. It can take generations to break out of this cycle.

## Type II Public Diplomacy

This is what one might call the "post-Murrow" stage – a more sophisticated form of government PR. When Edward R. Murrow, director of the United States Information Agency, found out about the CIA's botched attempt to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, his furious response was: "[if] they expect us to be in on the crash landings, we had better be in on the takeoffs [too]".

President Kennedy apparently took this advice, a by January 1963 the USIA's role was no longer merely to inform and explain US objectives, but "to help achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives by … influencing public attitudes in other nations". This explicitly shifted the mission from information provision to persuasion.

## Type III Public Diplomacy

As practiced by many foreign ministries today, this type has graduated from simple government PR to something closer to nation "branding", in that it recognizes the importance played by national image and attempts to influence this. However, the sectoral coordination and engagement has typically not extended beyond the prewar model of foreign policy plus cultural relations, and the two are often not well coordinated.

Much talk about "listening as well as talking", "engaging with foreign publics" and "the diplomacy of deeds" suggests that PD has become more sophisticated as well as more strategic in recent years. But the ultimate aim is still to present government policies in a more favorable light, and the "nation branding" element is merely an attempt to achieve this by going back to root causes.

## Type IV Public Diplomacy

This represents a radical reappraisal of the purposes as well as the principles of PD. In the United Kingdom, following Lord Carter's review of 2005, the Public Diplomacy Board was formed, and one of its earliest resolutions was that "branding Britain" was neither its function nor its intent. The "new public diplomacy" aimed to use PD tools for a different purpose and in a different way altogether: this was PD as an *instrument of policy*, rather than as a method of communication. Here, a wide range of non-military methods (including but not necessarily limited to communications techniques) were used in order to bring about changes in the views and behaviors of populations, often in order to produce policy changes through democratic influence over their own governments.

Surprising as this may sound, even *thinking* about national reputation is indeed a distraction in the context of the new public diplomacy. I would argue that governments should never do things purely for brand-related reasons; no action should ever be conceived of or dedicated to image management alone. Every initiative should be carried out with a real purpose in the real world, or it runs the risk of being insincere, ineffective and perceived as propaganda (not to mention the spending of taxpayers' money that is often extremely hard to justify).

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF FORCE

For the majority of nations, the need to study, understand and think about ways of influencing their international reputation is no longer really a matter of choice. Either one takes some control over one's national reputation or one allows it to be controlled by public opinion and public ignorance. The catastrophic consequences of the latter are understood all too well by most African nations.

Not every government, and indeed not every population, treats international approval as an important goal, but when we speak of the images of places, we are talking about something rather more significant than mere popularity.

The only sort of government that can afford to ignore the impact of its national reputation is one that has no interest in participating in the global community, and no desire for its economy, its culture or its citizens to benefit from the rich influences and opportunities offered by the rest of the world.

It is the duty of every responsible government in this age of globalization to recognize that the nation's reputation, one of the most valuable assets of its people, is given to it in trust for the duration of its office. Its duty is to hand that reputation down to its successors, whatever their political persuasion, in at least as good a state in which it was received, and to improve it, if possible, for the benefit of future generations.

Whether we are speaking of nation brand or public diplomacy, there seems little doubt that if the world's governments placed even half the value that most wise corporations have learned to place on their good names, the world would be a safer and quieter place than it is today.

History shows us that until the present day, most countries have invested most and continue to spend most on hard power, even though it is demonstrably only part of the solution to most problems.

Yet all the components of a sophisticated grasp of the persuasive skills lie within our reach: they simply need to be assembled into a coherent and functioning system. We have psychology, anthropology, sociology, linguistics, neuroscience, ethics, behavioral research, rhetoric, propaganda, media studies, marketing communications, brand strategy, public affairs, public diplomacy, cultural relations and much else besides: what we do not have is a science of influence that binds them all together and makes them work.

We need a system that converts these fundamentally analytical tools into operative mechanisms: which country or region will be the first to forge this new post-industrial revolution?

In the past, the rulers of countries have developed many forms of “kinetic” warfare to great levels of sophistication. Yet despite the overwhelming evidence that such warfare is entirely inadequate on its own, we have generally avoided giving the same attention to soft power. Boys prefer toys, while social science is complicated and (to some) also tedious and bewildering. And it seldom goes bang or makes people and buildings fall over.

Soft power does not, of course, replace hard power. Countries still have their obligations to their allies and many still need a defense capability. I am not arguing for “foreign policy as social work”, as a recent *Times* leader thundered. Hard power is unquestionably another human necessity. My intention is simply to urge the development of soft power – understanding it and wielding it effectively, responsibly and efficiently – at least to the same level as hard power, so that a useful majority of countries and regions have both tools in their toolbox.

It is time for governments to give these other skills their due importance, and to work hard at improving their capability in this area. They need to invest heavily in cultural relations, in public diplomacy, and in the other instruments of soft power.

Far from diminishing their influence, such an investment will greatly improve their ability to contribute to the challenges of our age. We all need to arm ourselves for the struggles that lie ahead.

## CHAPTER 3

# Place Marketing as Politics: The Limits of Neoliberalism

*Aram Eisenschitz*

## INTRODUCTION

Place marketing of cities is commonly seen as helping localities attract the groups they need for their future, whether they are investors, house buyers, developers or tourists. The argument in this chapter is that place marketing should also be regarded as a political activity that resonates with the dynamics of a particular class settlement. Each political era constitutes a class settlement in the sense that it is constructed around a particular relationship between labor and capital. Since the 1970s, place marketing has been associated with the transformation of industrial cities during the transition from social democracy to neoliberalism, a politics that gave coherence to place branding in the form with which we are all familiar. While urban place marketing is concerned with the economic health of a particular city, it is none the less inextricably linked to the dynamics of the neoliberal settlement which strengthened capital and weakened the working class. This settlement is multifaceted, spanning measures to destabilize the working class, to create a global financial infrastructure that permitted the out-movement and privatization of industry, to weaken the welfare state, to promote hypermobility for capital and labor through globalization, and to oversee the creation of a business-friendly environment at the national, regional and local levels.

Since resistance to neoliberalism was so strong in the cities, the very activity of place marketing has been part of the politics of this transition. To create successful cities, place marketing has had to spell out elements of the new settlement. In particular, it has been closely associated with the gentrification of the old industrial cities, which has proved to be a significant strategy for quelling political resistance to its projects (Smith 2002).

Place marketing is not specific to neoliberalism. The Garden Cities were one example of place branding for a social democratic class settlement that

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rested on the collective ownership of land, and high levels of redistribution and community (Donald 1999: 60). The New Towns continued this tradition in the post-Second World War period, demonstrating to a global audience the benefits of social engineering (see Wilson 2009). The socialist Greater London Council of the early 1980s assiduously developed, for a settlement characterized by state control over productive industry, its own form of place branding that would return benefits to its labor force and local residents. By the use of symbolic policies such as its festivals or its "fares fair" policy, it gained widespread domestic support – and, as befits a branding strategy, further interest from around the world (Eisenschitz and Gough 1993). Los Angeles similarly marketed highly political anti-union policies during the 1930s, which attracted both people and investment (Davis 1990). Class settlements are always connected symbiotically to locality. These examples suggest that place branding not only uses the politics of a class settlement to benefit a city, but that certain cities also reinforce that settlement.

As a result of economic crises, however, this period is drawing to a close. In the next section it is argued that place branding is a part of the transition to and consolidation of the neoliberal settlement by bringing a middle-class presence to the potentially politically unstable cities to counter working-class impoverishment. Yet, as the third section below suggests, its deployment in its current form is unlikely. Finally, we argue that the future of place marketing depends on the politics that emerge from the current economic difficulties.

## PLACE MARKETING AS CLASS POLITICS

Successful place branding has a strongly visual aspect, whether it is the recycling of industrial leftovers as heritage, the waterfronts, the edgy neighborhoods or the juxtaposition of renovated period buildings with postmodern design. The emergence of these cities – helped by place branding – has been possible only because of the changes wrought by neoliberalism, but equally, they reproduce and construct that political environment.

The development of the postindustrial city with which place branding is strongly associated, was a class project with its roots in the protracted economic crisis of the 1970s associated with the collapse of social democracy. The industrial cities were forced to reinvent themselves after the devastation caused by the loss of their manufacturing base. Despite being portrayed as inevitable, it was a deliberate expression of class politics involving the crushing of the political power of an industrial working class. Large-scale manufacturing is now located in countries such as China, where political resistance is nonexistent. Deindustrialization weakened the working class, who were either displaced from the city centres as council housing was partially privatized or who were forced into the casual labor market, and often into an “underclass”. After a fifteen-year transition to this new world, the equally long boom saw its consolidation as Western economies reoriented themselves toward providing services and the cities entered a period of competitive struggle to position themselves in the global economy.

Place branding contributed actively to changing social democracy’s class relations. Canary Wharf in London, for example, was seen by prime minister Mrs Thatcher herself as demonstrating a neoliberal political project (Smith 1989). Marketing campaigns for London’s Docklands were an early expression of place branding in its modern form and a milestone in the development of neoliberal politics on the ground. They made the statement that, after two decades of neglect and vacillation, as well as exposure to “loony left” local authorities, it was the market, liberated by Conservative politics, that got things done. The contrast with the existing East End demonstrated the political polarization of neoliberalism and social democracy, the need for bold initiatives to reverse years of decline and above all the political message “There is no alternative.”

While we now accept this market-oriented world, we must not forget the difficulties and resistance in the struggle to create a strategic institutional framework for it. Despite teleological historical accounts, it was never obvious that this outcome would prevail. Neoliberalism succeeded by constructing a consensus (Harvey 2006), though its hegemony came about through political and economic force in the form of a severely deflationary economic policy. Place branding is integral to achieving that consensus, and conversely, consensus is a condition for effective place marketing (Anholt 2008).

Place branding, in Britain at least, is associated with the selective gentrification of the deindustrialized cities that has constructed a consensus with key elements of the new settlement. First, cheap and ample credit coupled with financial deregulation fuelled a boom in housing that won over critical sections of the working class. Second, deindustrialization and privatization left huge amounts of derelict land in near-central locations. Third, the recoil from the top-down politics of the social democratic local authorities legitimated a more business-oriented and less democratic structure of local governance. This politics no longer takes political positions but expresses a coalition between civil society and the private and public sectors.

These changes have led to a place branding focused on “creative” postindustrial cities characterized by the growth of knowledge-based small firms in media, fashion, film, TV, publishing, art, music, retailing, entertainment, business services and tourism (Scott 2006). Their economies depend on attracting a new middle class, a strategy that is regarded as the only feasible solution to their problems – they are a means of class stabilization and an antidote to crime and economic decline. Despite being a Victorian solution to poverty, gentrification has taken on a global resonance as urban planning is taken out of the hands of local authorities and handed over to central government and the corporate sector (Smith 2002). The middle class, however, demand environmental improvement and a range of services that includes high end retail, restaurants, culture, quality housing, infrastructure improvement and education. These make for good place-branding copy, providing images to attract middle-class incomers. But gentrification depends primarily on the neoliberal politics that swept away the social, political and physical infrastructure of a century of industry.

Gentrification epitomizes this class politics, though it remains hidden in the discourses of regeneration (Smith 2002). Tower Hamlets, in the East End of London, for example, saw the middle class brought in to the poorest borough in the country, and its interests prioritized over those of an impoverished local population (Dench *et al.* 2006). Gentrification was primarily about a cultural shift, from the community closeness – and political awareness – of settled localities such as the Isle of Dogs, to the rootlessness associated with flexible labor markets and individualism (Young 1994; Foster 1999: 290ff).

Gentrification and the place branding associated with it are powerful political solutions to urban problems that offer a number of political subtexts. They signal that the cities are safe for capital, that they have been tamed for investors – a classic example being that of Liverpool, promoted as "Vintage Port", which has "lost the violent purple of its youth and taken on the rich tones of age" (Ward 1998: 210). They signal to developers that there are facilities that will cater for the new middle class who will tame the lawless areas. Those facilities will also attract tourists, since the middle class have more in common across nations than they do with their own working class. Place branding is closely associated with tourism, which is a paradigmatic neoliberal sector that apparently demonstrates the advantages of postindustrial development, despite the questionable benefits it offers to localities (Holden 2005) and its dependency on and reproduction of inequalities.

Branded cities demonstrate to industrialists that the local state is in favor of growth and that, above all, that workers are docile. They demonstrate to the professional middle class that old, class-based perceptions are outmoded, and that these locations are attractive, safe and cater for their new tastes – there is a strong focus in marketing aimed at new residents on the environment, culture, child-friendliness, schooling, community, retailing and personal safety. In such marketing, working-class people are often portrayed through the rose-tinted lenses of the matriarchal industrial community. These cities – or their image – also demonstrate to the public that economic revival is a result of local authority entrepreneurialism, thereby validating the long struggle over local government reform. In particular, they celebrate pragmatism over political ideology (Gertner 2007; Power *et al.* 2008). Yet place marketing – like neoliberalism – is highly political, even if its self-image is one of practice.

To employers, the labor force is all-important: much place marketing continues the signals of the 1970s, namely the submissiveness and degree of unionization of the labor force – high proportions of women workers were often regarded as a sign of low union support. The labor force is also important in its service role to the incomers. Place branding has often signalled the friendliness of the local authority in order to counter their erstwhile widespread hostility to anything other than industrial jobs. This, again, is a class issue, reflecting new patterns of urban governance, though its importance declined once capital had won the class war.

As neighbors, local people create an ambience that impacts on the quality of life, crime and community, and as local politicians they can affect the locality's political culture and economic future. Their attitudes to the changing city are therefore important, and for that reason place marketing is often concerned to show that the changes do not involve an influx of "yuppies" out to take advantage of them (Ward 1998). Place branding also changes political perceptions. Glasgow's celebration as European City of Culture 1990 were not just aimed at changing perceptions of the city but also intended to marginalize its socialist remnants, creating sentimental rather than political interpretations of its socialist past (Booth and Boyle 1993: 39), which inhibited local people from making connections between its past and the present. This depoliticized discourse and demonstrated to existing populations, potential migrants and inward investors that the past is truly dead. Bilbao equally illustrates the politics of the postindustrial city. Was it a coincidence that ETA, the Basque liberation movement, declared a ceasefire when the Guggenheim Museum of modern and contemporary art opened in its capital (Ockman 2004: 230)?

## THE LIMITS OF NEOLIBERALISM

Place branding represented a once-and-for-all political moment that exploited the restructuring of urban spaces as a consequence of the neoliberal settlement. Though it is becoming less important as neoliberal politics is absorbed into the mainstream, the context of that movement is increasingly problematic.

## Marginality

The economic boom was associated with excess credit which, when combined with grants, made marginal areas viable. Many of the cities that have been subject to place marketing were on the margins of viability and were supported by public investment in infrastructure. London's Canary Wharf, for example, benefited from an estimated £4bn of infrastructure investment plus tax relief from Enterprise Zone status (Turkie 1991). In the USA, despite the ideology of private-sector growth in place-marketed cities, there was much greater public support than had been expected (Ward 1998). In addition, tighter credit and plummeting commercial property prices have pushed poor cities far from the margins of viability.

## Bubbles

In an age where social inclusion and cohesion is on the political agenda, developing glitzy cities and icons for ostentatious consumption may be less politically acceptable. The thriving tourist centre in Baltimore, USA, made it possible to ignore the social dislocation in its surrounding inner areas, but such indifference cannot be sustained indefinitely. Place branding, however, tends to encourage the development of divided cities by supporting agglomeration economies. Hotels, for example, become more profitable if a shopping mall is added, and vice versa. Place branding encourages virtuous circles, as increasing critical mass deters competitors and supports existing investors. Bubbles, which are spaces of exclusion, can exist for any use, particularly tourism (Judd 1999) and financial conglomerations. It is noteworthy that they often thrive in environments with poor levels of democracy, such as Las Vegas. Dubai's absence of democratic restraint explains its attractiveness to capital, as it uses shopping, entertainment, sport, hotels and residential investment to reinforce overall economic viability, creating a bubble environment par excellence. Within a more open polity there could well be resistance to such aggrandisement.

These spaces use urban design, policing or, as in Los Angeles, physical barriers and an absence of public transport, to exclude the poor (Davis 1990), a group that has been displaced by gentrification. Bubbles are often symptoms of high economic and social polarization (Minton 2009: 111ff), to be found in gentrified cities where they enhance personal safety. Will it remain acceptable to ignore poor areas and concentrate on the areas of light (Boyer 1995)? The very existence of an exclusionary bubble demonstrates the failure of physical regeneration. It was assumed that service jobs would compensate for the loss of industrial jobs, but since the recent credit crunch, reliance on services is now being seen increasingly as a weakness, particularly as it is apparent that such services can also be outsourced. If crisis strengthens the state and hastens greater mutuality, criticisms of the market and the development of social alternatives may weaken the private sector solutions that are the staple of place marketing.

## Cities of the Spectacle – Raising the Threshold

The scale of city branding has been rising. Cities increasingly compete against each other with large-scale investment projects. Marketing icons are ever more spectacular, with each round of investment escalating the stakes and the risks, particularly for the public sector. Bilbao's Guggenheim set the standard for the next round of players, while Dubai's ambitions made competition from most localities futile. Yet benefits for local populations are often disputable: the Olympics often provide little of benefit (Roche 2000). For example, 2 million people lost their homes during preparations for the Beijing Games in China in 2008 (COHRE 2007).

This process was driven by the excess credit that allowed city politicians' egos free rein. It allowed investment on a large scale, which is always difficult to find, while, as we have argued above, also reducing private-sector risk, particularly because place branding so often occurs in business-friendly environments with little political interference. Branding is therefore pulled in two directions: on the one hand, in times of distress more locations may engage with it, yet the combination of greater competition and higher stakes reduces the possibility of any particular city's success. Only the most secure and the most diverse are likely to gain. Firms will be attracted to the least regulated economies, yet it is those that are likely to suffer from the volatility attached to activities without deep roots in particular localities, as is the case with tourism.

## Clone Towns

A further limitation on place marketing lies in the way that investment generates clone towns (New Economics Foundation 2004). Once a formula has been adopted, then no city will have a unique selling point. This applies to the typical US tourist city, where Frieden and Sagalyn (1990) term the mix of conference centres, markets, pedestrian streets, domed stadia, aquaria, upmarket retail, concert halls and museums, "the mayor's trophy collection". Failure occurs with market saturation, which is exaggerated by place branding where success inevitably breed clones.

Cloning is intensified because many branded places are relatively undifferentiated and difference is often bolted-on rather than built-in. In Britain there has been promotion of the "vibrant" city, epitomized by the café lifestyle and the international boulevardier (Ward 1998: 223). Yet behind that image was heavy capital inflow aimed at mass markets in offices, flats, retail chains and a predictable range of tourist attractions. Leeds and Manchester were swamped by house builders who relied on private investors to pay prices that could not sustain credible yields. These cities may again turn to marketing to help them ride out their difficulties, but any local distinctiveness has been reduced by these investment inflows.

## Cyclical Overinvestment

Place marketing aggravates the cyclical element of growth that encourages overinvestment and has been associated with some of the biggest casualties of the recession. Some cities that have employed place marketing have experienced the largest oversupply of residential property and the greatest fall in house prices, reflecting the fact that deregulated markets do not operate with the restraint that a public sector concerned with sustainability, particularly with regard to public services, would impose. Overinvestment – Keynes' animal spirits – is indeed endemic to such markets. Place marketing also tends to excessive investment, because the ambitions of local politicians often override economic realities. This is seen most clearly by the politics of sports in the USA, where cities squander vast sums on supporting or luring teams with the promise of stadia, yet with few appreciable local economic benefits (Euchner 1999; Rein and Shields 2007).

Successful place marketing may therefore push cities beyond their carrying capacity by diverting costs. Orlando, Florida, for example, bears the brunt of congestion in Disneyland (Fogelsong 1999). It also threatens the future of tourism – for example, Las Vegas has problems with water, labor supply and housing, yet these are not taken into account by the tourist industry, which dominates the local authority (Parker 1999). These problems reflect the fact that place marketing is often implemented by local authorities where strategic planning is weak – indeed, its growth mirrors the decline of coordinated, statutory planning.

## THE FUTURE

Will the new precepts of neoliberal planning be abandoned, given the rapidly multiplying social costs of recession? If place marketing is part of the battle of political ideas, then its future depends on the nature of changes in the class settlement. Has the boosterism that underlies so much place marketing had its day when it is abundantly clear that rapid urban growth leads to polarization and imbalance? Cities amplify and demonstrate the intensity of British class differences, the degree of poverty and the lack of social mobility.

Recent emphasis in Britain and Europe on growth *and* social cohesion could strengthen the local state and create a class consensus that could change the environment for place marketing fundamentally. The 2012 London Olympics, for example, were secured against the promise of regeneration and we may see a theme of class integration emerge, as it did for the nineteenth-century expos (Roche 2000).

There is growing recognition within British politics that consensus, rather than polarization and conflict, raises labor productivity, makes for more decisive local governance and helps to attract inward investment (Gough and Eisenschitz 2006). A post-crisis politics may tilt the scales towards reconciliation. Marketing would target local populations in an attempt to overcome scepticism about change. Baltimore's harbor development, for example, emerged out of physical policies to prevent the modernist centre and its economic restructuring from alienating the surrounding poor, black population (Harvey 1989). Such a politics would concentrate on a class politics of efficiency and inclusion, defending local populations against profit-making interests in the supply of subsistence goods. That was the case with London Transport, where a social democratic regime created by its nationalization provided what it regarded as the best facilities possible for its citizens. Such a politics in local government may question the zero sum element that is so characteristic of place branding and which often redistributes activity between localities.

On the other hand, there may be a return to repressive neoliberalism to deal with the impact of the collapse in class discipline and with what has been termed the social war in the cities (Ramonet 2002). The appearance of cuts in state spending may accelerate this. With the collapse of many of the disciplining features of society – work, family, community – some of Britain's postindustrial cities may follow the American path of social disintegration. That might require a combination of a repressive social policy, in which the underclass is physically contained, with the construction of physical bubbles of gentrification. If social division in the cities becomes institutionalized, then marketing strategies may be given a new lease of life; emphasis would be on safety, economic growth and the excitement that physical features can give to a skyline. Its dark places would be airbrushed away.

The recession and the government's rescue strategy are deeply politicizing – political change and with it changes in the governance and economic strategies of the cities are inevitable. One cannot therefore assume that the type of place marketing we have seen since the 1980s will continue.

## CHAPTER 4

# Knowledge Theory Perspectives on Place Branding

*David Snowden*

## SITUATED EMERGENT MEANING

For Christmas 1998 my parents followed a long tradition of giving me a book related to Welsh culture. That year it was *The Land and the Sea,* a collection of the works of Kyffin Williams, published to celebrate his eightieth year. I have admired his work from when I first saw a portrait painted by him, of a much loved headmaster a quarter of a century earlier. He is an artist who has a profound understanding of place, both in his landscape work and his formal and informal portraits of the people of his native land, the Brythonic Kingdom of Gwynedd which dominated what is now Wales from the fifth to the thirteenth centuries. The Romans knew it as *Venedotia*, or the land of Venus, and I had the privilege of growing up there, walking its hills and sailing its coast. To sit on the summit of Tryfan as the sun descends over the Glyder ridge and Y Garn, casting shadows on to the precipitous slopes of Pen yr Ole Wen is a profound experience, not just of the aesthetic beauty of the landscape, but of one's place, one's identity, one's place of belonging. There is a welsh word, *Cynefin*, which means all of that and more and has no equivalent in the English language, where it is crudely translated as habitat or place. In his preface to Kyffin Williams' book, Nicholas Sinclair connects the word Cynefin to the interaction between human beings and their environment that is the essence of the author's work. I took that word as the name for a model that is the basis of this chapter, created to understand the different types of system within which we operate: ordered, complex and chaotic.

Place is not just a physical construct; a sense of place evokes a personal and collective response to something that is highly experiential, concrete and yet abstract. Something that situates lives, enables meaning and instantiates identity. In the modern world this is augmented by the ability to link and connect across space, if not time, with people and places with whom we

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have no physical contact. The question of place, of situated identity, is a complex one that makes *meaning* a problematic word and challenges many of the conventions of marketing.

To understand how such identity forms, we need to develop an understanding of the nature of different types of system, the ways in which complex human interactions stabilize, and the manner of their disruption. This chapter will elaborate the Cynefin model presented above in the context of place marketing, and will also introduce the idea of fitness landscapes, generated from the day-to-day micro-narratives of human discourse. The aim will be to gain new insight into three issues:

- the alignment between popular perception of a place, and the communication strategy of authorities within that space;
- gaining insight into strongly negative beliefs about a place that will be difficult to address directly, but can be addressed indirectly, sensing the emergence of weak signals that might lead to radical change in popular perception, and test interventions to stabilize (if positive) or disrupt (if negative); and
- engaging the target population in the emergence of a clear brand identity for a place, taking an evolutionary approach to perception.

The methods and techniques outlined were originally developed in the fields of knowledge management (Snowden 2002) and counter terrorism (Kurtz and Snowden 2003; Lazaroff and Snowden 2006). However, they have subsequently been applied to marketing (Stienstra and Snowden 2007) and leadership (Snowden and Boone 2007).

## THE NATURE OF SYSTEMS AND THEIR RELATION TO RESEARCH

Most research in the field of marketing is *inductive* in nature. Inductive reasoning involves attempting to infer a causal relationship of some type between an activity or phenomenon and some outcome. For example, observation of multiple towns situated by a large lake with water sports facilities might lead another lakeside town to conclude that investing in such facilities would result in their attracting water-sports enthusiasts. Now this is not deductive reasoning, it is not the case that there is a necessary connection between building such facilities and the consequent arrival of the enthusiasts. However, it is a probabilistic inference based on empirical observations. The goal of market research, through surveys, focus groups, ethnography and so on is to create a model that allows us to connect a series of preceding events and activities (which we can observe or influence) that have highly probabilistic outcomes. This is not just about the achievement of a desired outcome, but the achievement of that outcome in the most efficient manner.

The basic assumption of this approach is that there is a repeatable causal chain of some type which we can understand, model and use. We may qualify that by saying that we are working within the bounds of probability, but we are assuming a linear, causal and repeatable model. We also reward people or organizations whose model predictions turn out to be true, though this is necessarily done with the benefit of hindsight.

The type of system assumed in this approach is known as an *ordered* system. The nature of the system is such that it constrains all agent behavior and in consequence the agent behavior is predictable. An agent can be a person, a community, an idea, a myth or belief; it is anything that *acts* within the system. In this chapter, "system" will be used to denote any network that has coherence (a word to which we shall return). The existence of strong constraints means that we get repetition, and knowledge of those constraints is both possible and can be modeled.

Market research can also assume a different type of system, namely a *chaotic* or random system. In such a system, the agents operate without constraint, and are free to take any trajectory. Statistical techniques generally assume independent agency, and that normal distributions prevail in making decisions and assessing risk. Outlier events are eliminated as being so improbable that they can be dismissed.

## A third type of system

> A new awareness of the ancient counterpart to order began over a century ago with Poincaré and several others, and has surged in recent decades. In fact there is a fascinating kind of order in which no director or designer is in control but which emerges through the interaction of many entities. Emergent order has been found in many natural phenomena: bird flocking behavior can be simulated on a computer through three simple rules; termites produce elegant nests through the operation of simple behaviors triggered by chemical traces; each snowflake is a unique pattern arising from the interactions of water particles during freezing. The patterns that form are not controlled by a directing intelligence; they are self-organizing. The new science of complexity spawned by these findings is interdisciplinary, touching fields from mathematics to evolution to economics to meteorology to telecommunications. In the domain of emergent order, a goal "to predict (and thereby control) the behavior of systems not yet studied (but similar to those that have been studied) under conditions not yet extant and in time

> periods not yet experienced" is difficult if not impossible to achieve – but other goals are achievable. (Kurtz and Snowden 2003)

In an ordered system, the level of constraint inhibits agent behavior, forcing compliance with the rules of the system. In human systems we can think of dominant cultures, either at a society level or within a pressure group, as providing such constraints as well as more formal governance. When there are no constraints we have free agents and a system that is chaotic or random in nature. Its worth noting here that if a system is overconstrained it will eventually suffer catastrophic failure, at which point all certainties are lost.

The third type, known as a *complex adaptive* system (described in the quotation above) represents a different relationship between system and agents. Here, the system lightly constrains the agents, but the agents constantly modify the system as they interact with it. The system and the agents *co-evolve*, a concept to which we shall return in understanding identity. As a result of that interaction we have an inherent uncertainty as to the extent that the assumptions that underpin inductive research do not apply; in a complex system, the same thing will only happen in the same way twice by accident. The sheer number of interactions, permutations and combinations defies conventional modeling. A very small change can quickly be magnified through those interactions into a tidal wave that cannot be stopped. Patterns, once formed, are difficult if not impossible to disrupt, but may suddenly change or disappear for no obvious reason. Complex systems are often referred to as *far from equilibrium* systems; when they are disturbed they never settle in the same place – they exhibit apparent stability but then suddenly undergo radical and irreversible change.

## RETHINKING RESEARCH AND RISK

The nature of a complex adaptive system means that the principles underpinning inductive research are compromised, and there are no linear causal patterns. This is bad news for those who want certainty; however, complex systems have near infinite numbers of evolutionary pathways that can be followed. For the entrepreneur and innovator, these are the natural areas of operation, offering the chance to reinvigorate tired brands, or to change the image of a physical (or virtual) place in unexpected ways. As such, research, decision methods and risk require new methods and tools, as well as new ways of thinking.

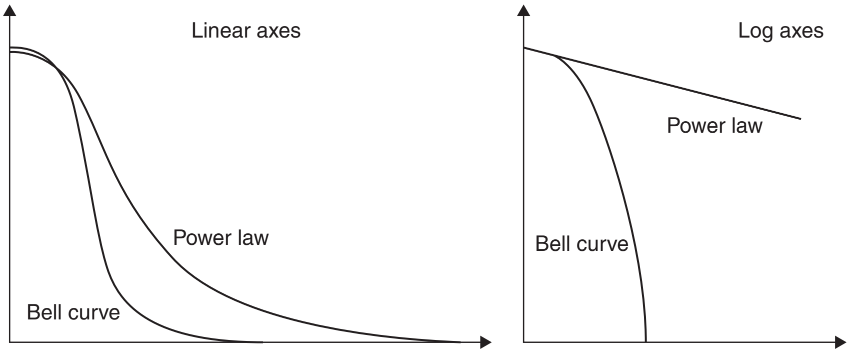
Two new methods are emerging within this space (and given the space constraints, they can only be described briefly).

## Power laws

Most managers will be familiar with the normal or Gaussian distribution. The classic bell-shaped curve is used extensively in research and risk assessment. Outlier events are eliminated if they fall outside a number of standard deviations of the mean, dismissed as statistical anomalies. However, in nature we rarely find such a distribution. If frequency is plotted against size for animal or human populations and plot on a double log scale the result will be a straight-line distribution. There are a smaller number of large cities compared to a large number of small towns. The population of elephants is less than that of fleas. The difference between the two distributions (other than the fact that one occurs in nature while the other does not) is that the outlier events have far greater significance if the correct distribution to apply is a Pareto one. So called low probability/high impact events turn out to have a higher probability than is normally assumed (see Figure 4.1).

On the positive side, this means that if we can identity favorable outlier events early, then small investments can produce large rewards. On the negative side, it means that events we dismissed as improbable may be more probable than we thought. One of the consequences of this is the need to focus on strategies that are resilient, rather than those that are robust. Resilient systems recover quickly from failure and are well positioned to exploit the new landscape that emerges. On the other hand, if the focus has

**FIGURE 4.1** **Exponentials versus power laws**



been on robustness, then failure may be catastrophic and recovery difficult, if not impossible.

### Micro-narratives

Narrative has been fundamental to human evolution; indeed, some writers use the phrase *homo narrans* in preference to *homo sapiens*: we are the story-telling apes. Narrative allowed us to share knowledge without relying on genetic change or imitation of parents, and it remains the primary method of day-to-day knowledge transfer. Narrative is also key to the way we define ourselves in our fractal relationships with our families, clans and places. Micro-narrative research is *abductive* in nature, allowing us to make connections between things that appear to be unconnected. The idea of abductive reasoning originates from the American Pragmatists and is sometimes known as the logic of hunches. While inductive approaches attempt to reveal causal relationships, abductive approaches seek to make unexpected connections, to reveal the weak signals that open up radical new evolutionary possibilities that we can exploit. Another way of thinking about this is to see it as a form of managed serendipity. To understand this approach better we need to look more generally at the role of narrative in human society, and then at some of the products of narrative research, before concluding with a general model of decision-making.

## THE ROLE OF NARRATIVE

The model shown in Figure 4.2 comes from the work of Boisot (1998), and is simple but profound. The two dimensions shown in the figure are:

- The vertical dimension (codification) contrasts knowledge which can be acquired independently of experience with that which can be deployed independently of the knowledge holder. The goal of much early knowledge management practice was to codify material. This is understandable, as codification means a faster and lower cost for the diffusion of knowledge; it is the whole *raison d'être* behind publishing papers and books.
- The horizontal dimension is less familiar. It contrasts knowledge which is acquired through practice and refined by experience, with knowledge which is highly abstract and symbolic in nature. Codification *establishes discernible differences between phenomena on the one hand, and between the categories to which they are assigned on the other.* In contrast,

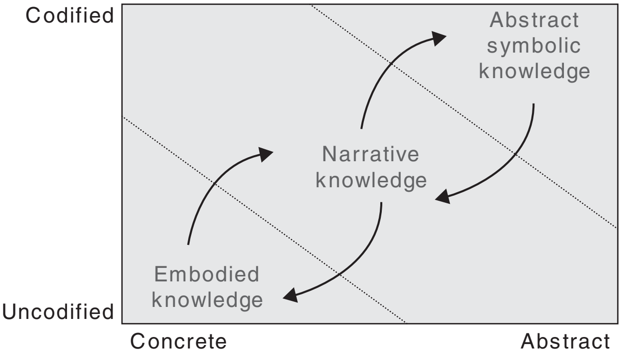
> abstraction *minimizes the use of categories by only drawing on those that are relevant for a given purpose.* (Boisot *et al*. 2007)

Embodied knowledge, then, is uncodifed and concrete, it is the knowledge of the Zen master, obtained through years of discipline. Codification is strongly resisted by Zen masters, as the acts of codifying and abstracting will involve creating a boundary between subject and object. Another example is the trainee London taxi driver, who has to spend two years driving through the streets of London on a motorcycle until s/he knows the names of every street and can describe any route out and back, naming all turns and landmarks without error, known as 'The Knowledge'. The pass rate is less than 50 percent and the taxi drivers' hippocampus is changed by the experience. I spent a few weekends recently restoring my tacit skill as a carpenter and discovered, as my father had before me, that describing things to your son can only go so far; sooner or later the individual has to act within the field, to learn by doing and becoming one with the tools and wood, thus dissolving that boundary between subject and object.

The process of abstraction and codification is critical to the advancement of science and industry alike. But the cost of increasing diffusion capability comes at the cost of depth and adaptability. The more categories I create, the less I see connections between them. The more I specialize, the less I can blend concepts to enable insight and innovation. A sat-nav is a good substitute for a map, but it can never substitute for the London taxi driver – it lacks the adaptability, resilience and practicality of The Knowledge.

We can now see the critical role that narrative, and linked concepts such as metaphor, play in human understanding. Narrative acts as a half way

**FIGURE 4.2** **The role of narrative**



house between the embodied knowledge of the taxi driver and the abstracted and impersonal voice of the sat-nav. Narrative mediates the embodied and the symbolic. Any good teacher uses stories and metaphors to enliven their papers (or those of others). Talk to a taxi driver and s/he can tell stories that help you get close to their knowledge. The stories my father told while we were building three boats together in the garage not only inspired me to go through the grind of eight coats of varnish, but also taught me why things were necessary and gave me clues that I recall today when I encounter a tricky issue with a troublesome piece of timber. (Oak has a very different temper from pine, for example, and you need to speak to it softly and with respect.)

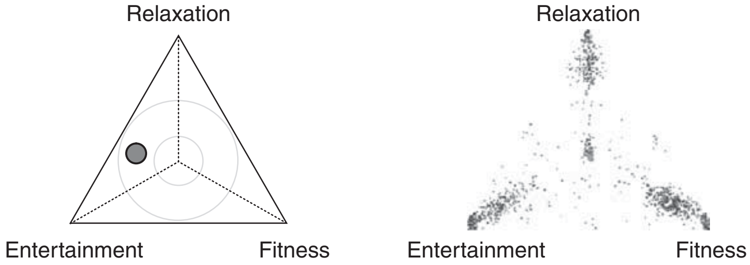
## SELF-SIGNIFIED MICRO-NARRATIVE

The role of narrative in market research has been understood for some time, but tends to be seen either as the construction of narrative to communicate an idea, or involves expert interpretation of narrative captured in the field. Ethnographic techniques are also increasingly in marketing. Two issues are faced here: the first is the inherent bias that follows from any expert interpretation; and the other is the restricted volume and a lack of real-time representation of results. If we are dealing with a complex system we need real-time, or near-real-time representations that allow us quickly to amplify or dampen outlier events or emergent patterns.

Abductive approaches to the use of narrative seek to capture the micro-narratives of people's day-to-day experiences. Stories at the school gate, the checkout queue or the many virtual chat systems such as Facebook determine culture and attitudes. We all share anecdotes or micro-narratives as part of our daily existence, but we rarely construct full narratives and when we do they tend to be for the purposes of entertainment or training. With modern technology, capturing the material is not difficult. Websites, mobile phones, Bluetooth pens and so on have all created the means by which oral and visual material can easily be captured. The issue is interpretation; reliance on technology is limited in what it can achieve, language is more subtle than can be envisaged by the algorithms that underpin the semantic web. It is also the case that the micro-narratives are themselves a signifier of a wider meaning.

The solution to this, originally developed in the context of weak signal detection for counter-terrorism, is to get the person who created the micro-narrative to self-interpret or signify its meaning. This is done within an interpretative framework created prior to capture based on abstract values associated with the field of study (see Figure 4.3). Without grammar there

**FIGURE 4.3 | Your holiday goal was?**



Here the respondent has indicated that *fitness* has little do to with their holiday goal; instead, there is a slight preference for *entertainment* over *relaxation*. From this input, three scales are created for analysis representing the relative strength of each label. Having to balance between three factors, without any indication of positive or negative places a cognitive load on the respondent that prevents a knee-jerk “mark in on the scale” response and allows complex relationships to be represented. On the right-hand side we show the overall respondent response coded by a demographic factor such as age. Selecting dots allows the original micro-narrative to be read. Quantitative data provides objectivity; qualitative and linked micro narrative provides an explanation to make the numbers both meaningful and persuasive.

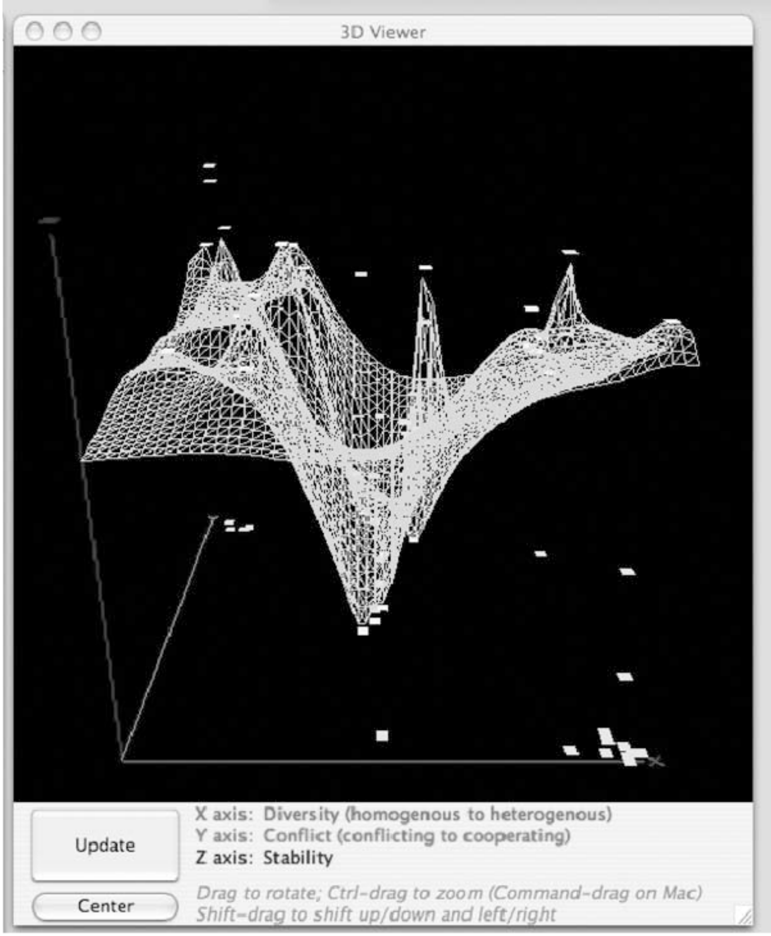
*Source*: Material and approach © Cognitive Edge 2010 and patent pending.

is no communication, and without some structure it is difficult to obtain meaning from narrative. Any researcher or ethnographer has some structure in mind when they carry out fieldwork. In micro-narrative research, that structure is made visible to the research subjects and they self-interpret their material within that structure to create a form of distributed ethnography.

In effect, the research subjects determine meaning, not the researcher. To take an example, a sample of visitors to a location can be asked to record micro-narratives (as voice, text and photographs) whenever they see something of interest or concern. As they do so they signify meaning in the manner illustrated on a remote device (rather like those that are carried around historical monuments giving a guided tour) but with a touch screen. As the visitors record their responses a body of quantitative data is created which is linked to the original content. Aside from conventional statistical analysis we can now use this large volume of material to create landscapes that illustrate the way in which the beliefs of large numbers of people are evolving. This allows both short-term tactical and longer-term strategic interventions.

Figure 4.4 shows a landscape which contains tens of thousands of self-signified micro-narratives. The hollows represent stable patterns of belief (brand value/perception and so on) while the peaks represent areas where things can change very quickly for good or ill. At any point the decision-maker can click on a part of the model and read the stories that have produced that pattern. The researchers or decision-makers are not seduced

**FIGURE 4.4 | Fitness landscapes**



X axis: Diversity (homogenous to heterogenous)
Y axis: Conflict (conflicting to cooperating)
Z axis: Stability

*Drag to rotate; Ctrl-drag to zoom (Command-drag on Mac)*
*Shift-drag to shift up/down and left/right*

by the first narratives they hear, or confused by raw correlations. Instead, having found a correlation, or used the above visualization to sense a pattern, they can touch the model and read or listen to the stories that have created that pattern. The narrative gives an explanation for what would otherwise be raw numbers, which then allow prompt action. The precise details are described more fully elsewhere (Snowden, 2010 forthcoming). However, micro-narrative approaches are starting to open up the possible of real-time market research, engaging the consumers directly in the research process itself.

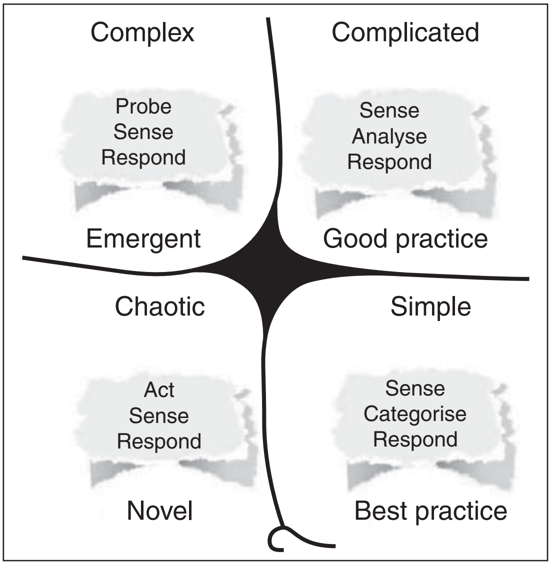
## A MODEL FOR DECISION-MAKING

New models and ways of working should not require us to throw out all that has gone before. While the traditional tools of marketing continue to apply to stable situations, where there is a complex situation they have only ever being partially successful. The new tools described above offer significant opportunities to progressive companies and organizations.

The Cynefin framework (Snowden and Boone 2007) gives us a structure to help with deciding between methods. It takes the ordered systems described earlier and divides them into those that are simple (everyone can see what is the right thing to do) and those that are complicated (it takes analysis or expertise to decide). The new tools and techniques described above relate to the complex domain. The model takes the three types of system identified earlier in the chapter, but takes the domain of order and divides it into two: *simple order* represents the space of the glaringly self-evident issues and problems for which a solution is known and it is only a matter of time or resources to achieve success; and *complicated order* represents a domain where there is a right answer, but it requires expertise or conventional research (inductive/hypothetico-deductive) to reach a resolution. The fifth central domain is the domain of *disorder*, the state of not knowing which system you are in, which is generally considered to be a dangerous place! People tend to take the approach they feel most comfortable with, so a complex problem could end up being treated as if it were complicated and vice versa. Figure 4.5 illustrates general approaches to strategic and tactical marketing in each domain. In full strategic use, the model is defined in the context of the marketing issue (aspects of all domains will be present) and it is then used to determine the research and intervention methods to be used.

Basic issues of resource and facility provision are likely to be complicated in nature. Issues relating to branding – in particular, changing the brand perception of a place – are complex. For complicated issues, a hypothesis method is appropriate, while for complex ones micro-narrative is more likely to sense a possibility or a threat earlier. In terms of interventions, a complicated issue can take a *fail-safe design approach.* If, on the other hand, we have a complex issue, then any individual or group with a coherent idea should be encouraged to carry out a small *safe-fail experiment*. The simple switch of words belies a significant strategic shift. If the issue is complex then we cannot know what is the right answer in advance; many answers are possible and the evidence will support most theories. Much conflict in strategy comes from different factions using the same facts to support their particular view as to what should be done. By recognizing the problem as complex,

**FIGURE 4.5 ▌ A model for decision-making**


Complex
Complicated
Probe
Sense
Respond
Sense
Analyse
Respond
Emergent
Good practice
Chaotic
Simple
Act
Sense
Respond
Sense
Categorise
Respond
Novel
Best practice

we acknowledge that no single faction can be right, the only way forward is low-cost *safe-fail* experiments in which ideas are tested in practice.

## MINI-SCENARIOS

The emphasis of this chapter has been on approaches for the complex domain of the Cynefin model. The main practical approach here is the micro-narrative method outlined above. The mini-scenarios shown in Table 4.1 give a sense of the approach that will be taken.

## SUMMARY

The goal of this chapter has not been to decry the traditional tools and methods of marketing, but to realize the boundaries of their applicability. The major issues facing place marketing are in fact complex – there are many emergent possibilities that can only be discovered and understood by taking a different approach to research and decision-making support. The use of self-signified micro-narratives represents one of the new emerging methods, which also allows for the engagement of citizens in the process of creating a coherent identity that will not only retain citizens but also attract

## TABLE 4.1 Mini-scenarios

| Issue | Illustrative approach |
|---|---|
| The alignment between the popular perception of a place, and the communication strategy of authorities within that space. | (i) Narrative material is gathered from visitors to the location, which they signify. The same material would then be signified by communication staff without sight of the visitors' material and the differences compared.<br>(ii) Stereotyped images of the place are presented to samples of visitors, who then choose and signify the image closest to their experience. Small changes over time are monitored by early intervention. |
| Gaining insight into strongly negative beliefs about a place that will be difficult to address directly, but can be addressed indirectly.<br>Sensing the emergence of weak signals which might lead to radical change in popular perception, and test interventions to stabilize (if positive) or disrupt (if negative). | A sample of visitors is asked to maintain a learning diary of their visit (incentives for this usually involve a donation to charity). Every time they see something significant they take a picture and signify the material. Capture costs are significantly lower than conventional research, and volume capture is greater. The patterns of signification will allow weak signal detection, both of the start of a negative trend, but also to see ways in which a general negative view can be shifted by a series of small interventions.<br>Video booths and hand-held devices can be used at major attractions for people, not just to be told about the place, but to have the opportunity to share and contribute their own stories of their experience. This is an established use in museums for measuring impact, but also for the creation of an oral history of visitor reactions that can become a part of the museum itself. |
| Engaging the target population in the emergence of a clear brand identity for a place, taking an evolutionary approach to perception. | Using voluntary and other groups to gather learning diaries (multiple micro-narratives as the text of pictures) signified at the point of entry. Success has also been achieved using schoolchildren as field ethnographers in holiday projects.<br>The material then shows how the local population perceive the place, and the way they will portray it in any service relationship.<br>The overall system can then be enabled on a website to allow potential visitors to discover the passion of people for their area. One recent project had Italian wine producers (small family groups) telling stories of their passion for their wine. Experiments showed that the narrative added to the taste and loyalty of visitors. |

visitors or immigrants. The approach is based on natural science, recognizing that the day-to-day micro-narratives of experience have a profound effect on individual decision-making. A focus group or questionnaire cannot produce the same level of insight. Ethnographic techniques do not scale up to whole populations, and cannot provide continuous real-time data.

In a dynamic and rapidly changing world, where stability of population, attitude, values and so on cannot be guaranteed, research and intervention methods need to reflect the nature of the systems that are being dealt with. By getting closer to the reality of experience, we increase our capacity to influence it, and to manage the evolution of a positive identity for *the place of our multiple belongings.*

## CHAPTER 5

# Country Images: Why They Influence Consumers

*Peeter W. J. Verlegh*

## WHY IS COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IMPORTANT?

Wines from Chile, oranges from Spain, autos from Germany and rock stars from the USA. What makes them special? This chapter examines the impact of the country of origin of products on consumers' product evaluations. The relevance of this topic was recognized as long ago as the 1960s in one of the earliest papers on international consumer marketing (Dichter 1962), which argued that a product's country of origin may have a "tremendous influence on the acceptance and success of products" (p. 116). A review by Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) further supports the importance of country-of-origin effects on consumer behavior. Unlike academic relevance, the practical relevance of country of origin has not gone undisputed. Kenichi Ohmae, for example, asserted that consumers "don't care about country of origin … [and] don't worry about where the product was made" (Ohmae 1989, p. 144). More recently, this concern was echoed by Usunier (2006), who argued that the large amount of academic interest in country-of-origin effects does not reflect the limited relevance of this concept for consumers and companies. Usunier argues that country-of-origin research thus provides an excellent illustration of the "relevance gap" that characterizes much of today's research on management. In this chapter, I shall discuss the background of country-of-origin effects, and demonstrate their practical relevance to the academic and business audience.

First, we should note that the managerial relevance of the country of origin depends on consumers' awareness of where products originate. Country of origin is generally indicated by "Made in … " labels. The use of these labels has been traced back to ancient Greece, where it was common practice to stamp products with logos or other indications of origin (Aaker 1996). For most products, country-of-origin labels are a legal requirement for goods imported into the US, the European Union and many other countries,

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but practices such as international sourcing make it increasingly difficult to answer the question "Where does this product come from?" One way to address this issue is by introducing a more fine-grained classification of product origins, distinguishing, for example, between "country of design", "country of production" and "country of assembly". This idea has been adopted, for example, by Ikea, which labels its products as "Made in X – Design and Quality: Ikea of Sweden". Such labeling is difficult for consumers to grasp, and is thus likely to have a limited impact on their purchase decisions.

But "made in" labels are not the only cues consumers may use to infer the country or origin (or "nationality") of products. As illustrated by the examples given in Table 5.1, marketing instruments such as advertising and branding may be used implicitly or explicitly to link a product to a country. Such links do not necessarily represent "the truth", and may link a product to a country other than the true place of manufacture or design. For example, despite sounding American or British, "Kenwood" is a Japanese brand of consumer electronics, and the British flag on Reebok shoes has no connection to the brand's country of origin (the USA) or to the shoes' countries of manufacture (mostly Asian).

Moreover, while consumers may not know where a particular product is manufactured, they often link a specific nationality to brands and companies: Nike is American, Gucci and Ferrari are Italian, Sony and Mitsubishi are Japanese, and Volkswagen is German. Like other "brand demographics" such as age and social class, country of origin is an antecedent of brand personality, or in the words of Heslop and Papadopoulos (1993, p. xxii) "[Country of origin] is to a product what *occupation* is to a new acquaintance we make at a party: we sort of *have* to ask about it (if it has not already been offered) to put our new friend into context [and] to make a value judgment."

To examine the idea that consumers associate (well-known) brands with a particular country of origin, I surveyed 77 students taking an introductory course in consumer behavior at Erasmus University in Rotterdam. The respondents were asked to fill in a one-page questionnaire containing a list of brand names. For each of these brands, respondents were asked to write down the country with which they thought the brand was associated most strongly. The brands were taken from a ranking of seventy-five "billion-dollar brands", which are considered to be the most valuable brand names worldwide. This ranking is based on research carried out by the Interbrand group and Citibank (Tomkins 2000). From this list, I selected the fifteen highest-ranked brand names, applying the restriction that a maximum of two brands could originate from the same country (as listed in the ranking).

**TABLE 5.1 Examples of references to country of origin**

| Marketing instrument | Type of reference |
|---|---|
| Advertising | Explicit:<br>• *Absolut*: "Vodka from the country of Sweden"<br>• *Siemens*: "from Germany with love"<br>Implicit (through the use of language or visuals):<br>• *Audi*: "Vorsprung durch Technik" (in UK)<br>• *Milka* chocolate: use of alpine scenery in TV ads<br>• *Ricola* candy: Swiss costume and alpine landscapes in TV ads |
| Branding/labeling | Explicit<br>• *Café de Colombia*<br>• *American Express*<br>• *Swissair*/*British Airways*/*Air France*/*Singapore Airlines*<br>• *Clearly Canadian*<br>Implicit (linguistic references or the use of colors/flags/symbols)<br>• *Kenwood* versus *Mitsubishi* (both Japanese)<br>• *Boursin:* French-sounding (Unilever brand)<br>• *Buitoni*, *Raguletto, Bertolli:* Italian-sounding (Nestlé, Unilever brands)<br>• *Ikea*: blue and yellow as corporate colors (combined with the explicit "of Sweden"), Swedish product names<br>• *Reebok:* use of the British flag in brand logo |

This resulted in the list given in Table 5.2, which shows a large degree of consensus regarding the countries respondents associated with each of the brands. For each of the brands, the country that was mentioned most often matched the actual country of origin (as listed in the *Financial Times*' ranking; see Tomkins 2000)). Brands were associated with 1 to 13 different countries (mean = 4.2, median = 3). The lowest degree of consensus was found for Nescafé, which was associated with 13 different countries. But even for this brand, the top three countries accounted for 73 percent of the responses. For the other brands, the top three countries accounted for more than 90 percent of responses. For ten brands, we found that a single country accounted for more than 90 percent of responses, and we obtained a 100 percent consensus for four of the brands (Microsoft, Mercedes, Heineken and Philips).

These results support the idea that consumers are able to (correctly) identify the country of origin of large brands, regardless of whether the brand is actively promoting this association. This finding, in turn, emphasizes the

**TABLE 5.2 Countries associated with well-known brands (N = 77)**

| Brand (country of origin) | Three most mentioned countries (number of respondents reporting specific association) | | | Percentage associated with "correct" country (total number of countries) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coca-Cola (US) | US (76) | Australia (1) | | 99 (2) |
| Microsoft (US) | US (77) | | | 100 (1) |
| Nescafé (SWI) | Switzerland (27) | Netherlands (20) | Italy (9) | 35 (13) |
| Mercedes (GER) | Germany (77) | | | 100 (1) |
| Ericsson (SWE) | Sweden (61) | Finland (6) | Denmark (4) | 79 (7) |
| Chanel (FRA) | France (75) | Italy (1) | USA (1) | 97 (3) |
| Sony (JAP) | Japan (71) | Netherlands (3) | France (1) | 92 (5) |
| Heineken (NL) | Netherlands (77) | | | 100 (1) |
| Samsung (KOR) | Korea (33) | Japan (30) | Germany (8) | 43 (6) |
| Ikea (SWE) | Sweden (71) | Netherlands (5) | Norway (1) | 92 (3) |
| Philips (NL) | Netherlands (77) | | | 100 (1) |
| Gucci (ITA) | Italy (71) | France (4) | Japan (1) | 92 (4) |
| Toyota (JAP) | Japan (72) | Korea (2) | Australia (1) | 94 (5) |
| Nokia (FIN) | Finland (42) | Japan (18) | Sweden (11) | 92 (8) |
| BMW (GER) | Germany (75) | US (1) | Switzerland (1) | 100 (3) |

practical relevance of country of origin. In an era where products are sourced and produced internationally, consumers continue to associate brand with certain countries, and depending on their strength and valence, these associations may be an important positive or negative element of a brand's image. In a recent study in Slovenia, for example, van Rekom *et al.* (2006) found that some consumers associate the Western (American) origin of McDonald's with the company being "pushy" in its selling and marketing.

## THE IMPACT OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN ON CONSUMER INFORMATION PROCESSING

Several studies have examined how country of origin influences consumers' judgments and choices. A large body of research shows that consumers use country of origin as a form of information about the quality and other attributes of a product. This results in different evaluations of identical products with different country-of-origin labels, even when additional product information is presented (Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999).

Consumers use country of origin as a cognitive shortcut when evaluating products, especially when other information is scarce. In line with this, country of origin has a greater impact on product evaluations when consumers are less motivated to process available information – for example, when involvement is low (Maheswaran 1994).

Verlegh *et al.* (2005) extend this conceptualization, and show that country of origin does not only act as an informational cue, but also affects consumers' interpretation of advertising claims. They argue that country of origin may also act as a "source" cue, which helps consumers to interpret other information about the product (for example, information that is presented in the form of advertising). While marketing research on source credibility has been focused mainly on celebrities and other spokespersons, the definition of source variables need not be narrow, and company, brand and country of origin may also be regarded as sources of advertising claims. This view is in line with studies investigating the role of corporate credibility in consumer evaluations of advertising. In these studies, corporate credibility is defined as "the extent to which consumers believe that a company can deliver products and services that satisfy customer needs and wants" (Brown and Dacin 1997). Analogously, country-of-origin credibility is determined by consumers' product-country image: in a given category, country-of-origin credibility is high when consumers have a favorable image of the country's products in that category, and low when the product-country image is unfavorable (Verlegh *et al.*, 2005).

In an experiment conducted among more than 700 German consumers, Verlegh *et al.* (2005) tested this notion, by comparing these consumers' responses to different ads for Dutch and Spanish tomatoes. At the time of the study, German consumers' image of Dutch tomatoes was poor, and Dutch tomatoes were known as "Wasserbomben" (waterbombs). Spanish tomatoes were the most important competitors, being seen as natural, sun-ripened produce. The experiment supported the notion that country of origin plays a dual role in this setting, acting as an informational variable, but also as a source variable. Overall, Spanish tomatoes were judged more favorably than Dutch ones, and this difference was larger for lower levels of ad involvement. Consumers use country of origin as an informational variable, and as a cognitive shortcut, a strategy that is relied on when consumers seek to minimize cognitive efforts (Maheswaran 1994). The second (source variable) role was supported by a three-way interaction between country of origin, ad involvement and ad type. For Dutch tomatoes (with an unfavorable country of origin), an increase in the favorability of advertising claims had a negative effect when ad involvement was high, but not when involvement was low. Together with other experiments (for example, Häubl and Elrod 1999), these results show that country-of-origin effects may be more complex than is often suggested, and emphasize the relevance of studying this phenomenon.

## HOW CAN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN BE USED BY MARKETERS?

Marketers often seek to leverage the effects of country of origin on consumer product evaluations, and attempt to build brand equity by associating their brand with a country of origin with favorable connotations (see, for example, Keller 2003). In general, country-of-origin effects result from consumers holding general images of a country's products. These images may very well be tied to the competitive position of a country within a certain category, an issue that was explored recently by Yip *et al.* (2006). As such, these images are specific to product categories, and may range from simple evaluative impressions to rich networks of cognitive and affective associations. In this section I shall focus mainly on the evaluative dimension of these images, and distinguish between cases in which consumers have favorable versus unfavorable images of a country's products within a category. Strategic implications are given for both situations.

If consumers have a favorable image of a country's products within a category, products from that country might benefit from a strong association with the country of origin. This could be established by emphasizing the country of origin in advertising, packaging or branding (see Table 5.1 for examples). Strategies like this may be enhanced when marketing communications are focused on relevant (and preferably well-known) characteristics of the origin country. This practice establishes a link between consumers' perceptions of the brand or product, and their perceptions of the country of origin. For example, marketers could emphasize a relevant country characteristic in their advertising, such as displaying mountains and waterfalls in an ad for "Clearly Canadian" mineral water. Another example is the recent slogan for French fruit that was used by the French promotional board Sopexa: "The sun in France just tastes better." Different product categories will benefit from links to different elements of consumers' perceptions of the origin country. Marketers should carefully examine their own brands to discover whether their country of origin has a favorable or unfavorable image, and which country characteristics are most appropriate to emphasize. The answer to this question may not always be self-evident. For example, a few years ago, German brewer Löwenbräu advertised it product as being "tastefully engineered in Germany", which establishes a link with the well-known stereotype of solid German engineering. More recently however, Löwenbräu has adopted the slogan "Born in Munich, loved by the world", accompanied by pictures of rural scenery, green slopes and clear skies.

But consumers do not always have a favorable image of a country's products within a category. Moreover, consumers' images may (at relatively short notice) shift from positive to negative as a result of factors that are often beyond the control of (individual) marketers, such as negative publicity around the origin country. Think, for example, about the negative impact of the "Muhammad cartoons" on the image and sales of Danish brands in the Arab world. Such events may transform the country of origin from an asset into a liability.

Those who are marketing products or brands from a country of origin with an unfavorable product-country image are therefore often advised to conceal, or at least deemphasize, the origin of the product (see, for example, Roth and Romeo 1992). This is not always a feasible practice, however, as trade regulations often require a clear and legible indication of the country of origin of a product. Moreover, as we saw in the study discussed earlier, consumers often associate brands with specific countries, so that country of origin is implicitly communicated through the brand name (note that this may be enhanced by past advertising with an emphasis on country of origin). Thus, when faced with negative product-country images, marketers might be forced to address these images directly. One approach is to try to reframe and contextualize the knowledge and stereotypes that consumers have available. This often involves long-term, concerted actions by governmental organizations and companies (see Anholt 2006). In order to improve consumers' product evaluations effectively, marketers should adapt their claims to the content and valence of consumers' product-country images. Countries are not in all ways like brands: current events and age-old stereotypes compete with marketing communications, and have their non-commercial origins as a clear advantage. These associations will also distort your communications, making it even harder to address negative images directly. A more indirect strategy of contextualization and reframing therefore seems appropriate.

Whether they are positive or negative, country-of-origin effects have an important impact on consumer behavior, and marketers should be aware of the many different complex mechanisms that underlie this impact. This chapter has attempted to introduce and discuss some of these effects, and translate them into practical insights.

# PART 2

# Individual Place Case Studies

## CHAPTER 6

# Case A: The Role of Nokia in Branding Finland – Companies as Vectors of Nation Branding

*Ulla Hakala, Arja Lemmetyinen & Juergen Gnoth*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses how a product brand can create leverage for a nation brand; that is, the country of origin of the product. Traditionally, countries have been considered to function as umbrella brands for product brands – for example, France for French perfume, Italy for Italian sports cars, and Japan for Japanese electronics. But can a product brand also boost recognition, exposure and credibility for a nation?

We discuss here how the relationship between the cell phone company Nokia and the country of Finland has led to a "co-evolution of commercial brand positioning and place branding". Nokia's worldwide success – it has been rated among the top ten brands on the global brand index since the year 2000 – has not been built in isolation.

The Nokia brand may therefore exemplify Gnoth's (2002) argument, that a country brand can be leveraged by its product brands as well as leverage its own cultural resources to improve its international standing, particularly the resources of the education sector. Finland harnessed a knowledge workforce second to none that has catapulted Finland to global brand stardom. Anholt (1998) was one of the first to explore the phrase "nation brand" systematically in the 1990s, highlighting differences between places and companies. According to Gnoth (2002), it is easier to brand individual products than nations, because a nation brand features uncontrollable, situational and boundary-spanning attributes whereas a product brand is largely dependent on the company's activities to stay alive. However, it has been forecast (Anholt 2002; Cova 1997) that these two will increasingly be intertwined: brands gradually become agents of culture and the channel of communication for national identities.

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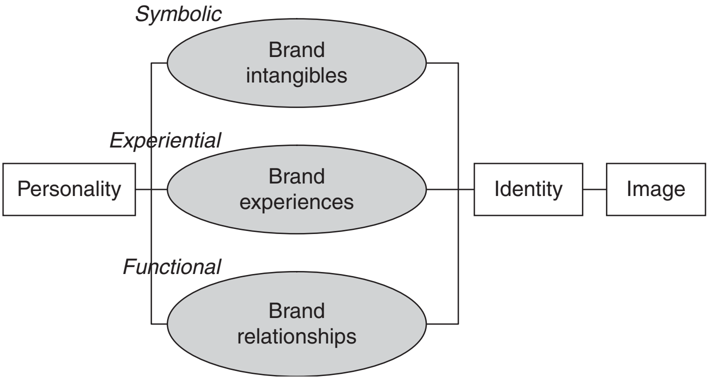
A brand is often defined as a set of functional attributes and symbolic values, branding being the process of associating the attributes to the product in order to add value to it (for example, Hankinson and Cowking 1993; Simoes and Dibb 2001; Knox and Bickerton 2003). According to Kapferer (2004), its success is based on its saliency, differentiability, intensity and trust attached to the associations. As is true for product brands, a nation brand involves giving expressive and affective meanings to a geographic entity as the power of a brand eventually relies on the emotional relationships it develops. More than product brands, however, a place brand stirs emotions. It represents the relationship people have formed between themselves and the geographic space that has thus turned into a place. Gnoth's (2002, 2007) models are thereby extending conventional (product) branding theory, posing the challenge of testing whether place branding can be structured and explained in this way. Before applying his theoretical thoughts, however, the model itself needs to be explained in the context of the relationship between identity and image and the context of Finland and Nokia.

## IDENTITY

Regarding the process of branding, there are three essential concepts to be acknowledged: personality, identity and image (Abratt and Shee 1989; Moilanen and Rainisto 2009). To appreciate that a place has personality requires the recognition and acceptance that places have significant characteristics that permeate its behavior in a consistent manner. A personality for a nation or country is derived from its core values and beliefs. These can be experienced at different levels: the functional or relational, the experiential, and the symbolic (de Chernatony 1999; Gnoth 2002; Fill 2009) (see Figure 6.1). According to Beeson *et al.* (1996), a place can even have different personalities both within and between individuals, as both places and people can have complex characteristics that, given interests, situations and circumstances, lead to a place being perceived as seemingly different entities.

Adapting Kapferer (2008), identity can be defined by asking the following questions: What is the vision and meaning of the place? What makes it different? What are the meanings that make people aware of it? What are its core values? The brand identity represents the core attributes of a place in its multidimensional complexity. Brand managers need to make sure that the image that different stakeholders have of it always relate back to the brand's heritage as well as to its strengths, limitations, strategies and values to be true and effective over time (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000). Furthermore, the construction and verbalization of the brand identity has to

**FIGURE 6.1 The process of nation branding**



reflect the full complexity of that identity (Burmann and Zeplin 2005). Unlike product brands, however, place brands are more likely to succeed from the "bottom up"– that is, starting its growth from and with the people it represents (Gnoth 2002).

Nations are particularly difficult to brand because, as historical entities, they represent the process and outcome of political struggles over issues, resources, values and domination among multifarious stakeholders. It is therefore critical to the creation of a nation brand that its brand's values are translated into emotional benefits to result in an emotionally appealing brand image (Aaker and Joachmisthaler 2000; Morgan *et al.* 2002). As Anholt (2003) put it: "Actions speak louder than words." To be credible and appealing to markets, citizens need to "like" their nation brand and, to be loyal, not only maintain positive attitudes but also to express these consistently in their behavior (DeWitt *et al.* 2008).

For markets, a country image is usually an unplanned, often coincidental, perception of a country (Han 1989). The information it conveys is based on people's stereotypical attitudes and values that drive perceptions and interpretations of experiences. To some extent, therefore, they can be formed organically through experiences, or induced by commercial or political propaganda (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005; Moilanen and Rainisto 2008). It is usual for stereotypes to play a part in the image of a nation (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2000). While being considered superficial, they are mental shortcuts to attitudes and intentional orientations. To begin building an effective nation brand one has to start with an understanding of these stereotypes and either alter or reinforce them to create a top-of-mind, easily accessible image. As in any branding, the “product”, i.e. the country, should be thought of from the viewpoint of the “end users” – that is, the visitors, businesses, investors, media and so on (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005). Depending on the types of stereotypes formed for example, emotional or cognitive-factual, they are more or less difficult to graft and grow. In any case, changes need to follow the spirit of brand extensions (Mao and Krishnan 2006), an art that is yet to be discovered for place branding and for which more studies are still needed.

## CREATING A COUNTRY IMAGE

What is the stereotypical image of Finland? As a people, Finns are known for their seriousness (see Carbaugh 2005). According to Santonen (2003), the seriousness can be a result of long, dark winters and tough living conditions – particularly in the past. Therefore, and at the functional level of a nation brand, the Finns’ professions and fields of application, their education, their friendships, their likes and dislikes, and life in general, form the basis for (brand) relationships. The Finns take these life domains quite seriously, which makes them unique at the experiential level. At the symbolic level, in turn, such experiences often make Finland recognized for its “three S’s”: sauna, sisu[1] and Santa.

For different audiences, images of a nation have different meanings according to class, demography, culture and so on. Moreover, the images are multilayered, being composed of historic and contemporary imagery, and fragmented (O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy 2000). Places differ because the interaction between people and land evolves differently; a place is shaped by the way that space is perceived and how the emerging interactions between people, land and neighbors is interpreted. A seemingly tautological process occurs, whereby people shape space into place and, in turn, the place shapes the people.

Traditionally, a nation has been considered to consist of a people inhabiting a territory, sharing a common culture (values and beliefs), and possessing a sense of common interests (O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy 2000). These are all elements that have been more-or-less nurtured and managed in the struggles between the nation’s rulers and those ruled; and they are reflected in how the country’s various cultural and economic domains have been shaped. For a nation brand, however, these elements form only the structural parts of the brand. It is during their particular interactions that we can outline from where the brand relationships emerge at the functional level of the place brand. The schema-like elements that help to typify the domains are, for example, the technological, agricultural or educational domains of a nation. The interaction of these domains within a physical environment, a geographic zone and typical weather patterns create the parameters within which a place brand emerges. The seasonal rhythm on the Mediterranean shores of Italy thus influences what and how agriculture has developed, and how people built their unique "*joie-de-vivre*". Genotypically, therefore, the functional elements of a place brand are more or less the same across many countries. It is the meaning-making or relationship-forming interactions within and between these domains that create the brand relationships.

The experiences of these relationships and their interpretation then further shape exchange processes, be they socio-cultural, interpersonal, commercial or creative. The experiential level of the brand is thus beginning to generate, shape and exploit the uniqueness of the place brand. Following systems theory (Luhmann 1995), while many structural elements that form nations are thus similar across those nations, it is in the interaction of these that individualizing systems (nations) are formed. For example, the land that borders Finland is very much like that of Finland itself. To recognize and understand Finland as a nation that is different from its neighbours, it is more revealing to look out for *how* the interaction and exchange processes that characterize it have emerged rather than *what* is exchanged (D'Andrade 1995).

As to the creation and perception of the symbolic substance of place, there is a shift from the tangible level of experiencing the brand to the intangible level of its symbolism: it is not the fixed territory, the physical place per se that creates a place, but the meanings that are attached to its experiences and the perception of them. In short, we suggest that it is not the physical presence of Finland that contributed to the success of its country brand as such but rather the unique development of its processes and experiences, its investments in knowledge systems, technology and innovations as meaning-creating mechanisms that generated the brand's meteoric rise (Gnoth 2007.)

## METHODOLOGY

A literature review forms the background to a grounded research effort (Glaser and Strauss 1967) in which two interviews were conducted with members of a nation-branding committee appointed by the Finnish foreign minister, Alexander Stubb, in fall 2008, and led by Jorma Ollila, chairman of the board of directors of Royal Dutch Shell plc and Nokia Corporation. The committee was made up of prominent Finns with personal experience and proven ability in a wide range of fields, such as culture, business, sport, international advocacy and public relations. The interviewees were: Laura Kolbe, Professor of History at the University of Helsinki, and Jaakko Lehtonen, Director General of the Finnish Tourist Board.

The interview data was collected via semi-structured face-to-face interviews, "guided conversations" (as labelled by Zaltman and Coulter 1995) or "conversations with a purpose" (see Byrne 2004). The questions were posed inductively with the phenomenon of building a nation brand as the starting point. Inherent in this methodology is a commitment to discovery through direct contact with the incident, rather than a predefined theoretical formulation. Grounded theory provides an understanding of how people, organizations or communities experience events that occur (Corbin and Holt 2005).

## SEARCHING FOR THE SOUL OF A NATION: THE SYMBIOTIC BRAND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NOKIA AND FINLAND

According to Govers and Go (2009), branding a nation is a process of soul-searching. It is a process in which the place marketers, in consultation with the government, businesses and other actors, formulate the identity of the place. From this, a coherent place experience would be assembled, including a communications strategy that includes consistent narratives, supported by visuals. This facilitates a process in which the projected place image is consistent and in line with reality.

As Nokia is the best-known product brand coming from Finland (but not necessarily promoted as such) a relevant question might be: What is the role of the cell phone company Nokia in branding Finland? In order to find an answer we need to pose three subquestions. First, what does Nokia mean to the Finnish people; that is, what is its identity as a result of their experiences? Second, what role could the company play, or which cultural-system elements interacted and processes evolved in creating the Finnish identity? And third, can a nation develop into a brand through the support of an individual company?

To answer these questions, let us first approach the history of Nokia. It dates back to the second industrial revolution, when a Finnish mining engineer, Fredrik Idestam, established a wood pulp mill in Nokia, Southern Finland, and began to manufacture paper. Since then, the company has evolved dramatically, growing first into a conglomerate encompassing industries from paper to chemicals and rubber, and streamlining the operations into a dynamic telecommunications company in the 1990s (Häikiö 2001; Kaarttinen 2003). What brought about this expansion?

Martti Häikiö, the author of Nokia's history, claims that the main reason behind the development has been the huge growth of information technology, particularly the deregulation and digitalization as well as the launch of the GSM (Global System for the Mobile Communications) standard. According to Häikiö (2001), globalization has made it possible for a small company in a small country to grow into a large one. Häikiö also emphasizes the importance of the role of the former CEOs, Kari Kairamo and Jorma Ollila, in particular, and their strategic decision to concentrate on information technology at the right time. As to the significance of Nokia to Finland, Häikiö compares it to the *Kalevala*[2] (the national epic) and the Winter War[3] (1939–40). Historical associations are important in the brand-building process. In the case of Finland, they culminate in national survival stories; and every country needs such stories, as indicated by Professor Kolbe (2009):

> the national identity consists of snapshots of events and issues, in which history plays a dominant role. The collective memory of a nation pulls together moments of survival as well as steps of industrial success and cultural accomplishments. It is not easy to define which occasions are strong enough to form a national identity; it can be a war victory, an industrial achievement or cultural success. It can be an issue that addresses a nation, a shared experience that endures through the ages.

What, then, makes something into such a phenomenon? What are the characteristics of a survival story that the "collective memory" of a nation remembers and retells to following generations? To answer this question one of the informants referred to the story of Nokia, without the interviewer explicitly referring to it: "Nokia represents a survival story that Finnish people can very easily identify with. For example, the curve of the upswings and downswings in Nokia's history is this kind of phenomenon" (Kolbe 2009).

A fair conclusion to derive from Professor Kolbe's comment is that it seems to be an important characteristic in the Finnish survival story that success has not been achieved easily. One has to strive for success: "It is connected with the ethos of 'sisu'" (Kolbe 2009).

From a historical point of view, the phenomenon is connected to the world political situation, and furthermore, related to the period of transition that began in 1989, when the Berlin Wall was removed as a consequence of the changes in the political system: "Now there is some kind of turning point in politics, when a certain era is ending and giving space for something else. New impulses are needed and the countries and nations are positioning themselves in a new way" (Kolbe 2009).

The national identity of Finland has been shaped by many factors. For example, surviving the harsh winter climate; Finland's position between the

East and the West; the paradox of war and peace; as well as the relationship between nature and people. The Finns are close to nature, but at the same time they are the most educated people in Europe, if not in the world. This kind of double strength in their identity releases creativity. It has been said that Finnish people are at their best in crisis situations, when their true capabilities can be seen (Kolbe 2009).

The *Kalevala* gave Finns their roots. The Winter War showed how the Finnish people can survive attempts to destroy them made by a super power. The story of Nokia up to the present demonstrates how a small country, because of its investment in technological advancement and a highly successful educational system (see Pisa test[4]), can become competitive even on a worldwide scale. Education socializes the children, and the young become members of a nation. In doing so, education builds up a national domain, parts of which are transferred across social and cultural borders in the form of knowledge, innovation and creativity. Such knowledge capital can then be transformed into economic resources that benefit businesses.

At the time of writing, Nokia is the fifth most valuable brand in the world (Interbrand 2009). However, in spite of its global nature, Nokia is still a Finnish company. Its headquarters are in Helsinki, its management is almost totally Finnish, and the R&D is conducted mainly by the Finns. Like the *Kalevala* and the Winter War, Nokia has become part of the Finnish national identity, unifying the people and giving them self-respect:

> Nokia is an inspiring example for the Finnish people. It is a company that has succeeded in the B2C area and communication. This was a new field, in contrast to the basic heavy industrial sector where Finland's success used to be based. Thus Nokia symbolizes the structural changes in Finnish industry in the 1990s. Nokia manifests the ethos of survival, with engineering knowledge as its cornerstone. (Kolbe 2009)

Brands are said to posses "linking value" (Cova 1997). Accordingly, Nokia can work as a link between Finland's country image and branding efforts. However, people do not necessarily know where Nokia originates. For example, only 4.4 percent of 1,000 US students knew that Nokia came from Finland (Shimp 2010). This is not necessarily surprising; in a way. Nokia has been purposely "rootless" and has not emphasized its country of origin.

But, for Finnish people, Nokia has a deeper meaning: at its best, the success of the company strengthens the national identity and increases self-respect among Finns, creating a symbiotic relationship between the Nokia corporation and the nation of Finland, as illustrated in Figure 6.1 above.

While Nokia is all about technology and a somewhat odd instrument by which a nation's pride has been raised to become part of a place brand, to paraphrase D'Andrade (1995) again, culture forms not only by what is exchanged but more importantly by how things are exchanged, that is, how processes form and meaning is created.

## DISCUSSION

Fan (2005) has found a correlation between countries that have produced strong brands and that are strong brands themselves, though the direction of causation is unclear. The purpose of this chapter was to discuss how a product brand can create leverage for a nation brand; that is, the role of Nokia in branding Finland. There is an anecdotal saying in Finland: "Finland cannot benefit Nokia but Nokia can benefit Finland". The situation could be as Fan (2005) argues: the nation brand could emerge as a result of the success of a national industry (see also Anholt 2007).

Gilmore (2002) explains how the core of a nation brand must capture the spirit of its people and how it can be developed into a brand positioning. For the Finnish people, the narrative of Nokia represents the core of the brand identity – the soul of it. The narrative is a survival story, but a story that is not without its difficulties, as analyzed by Professor Kolbe (2009). Conquering those difficulties makes it easier for the Finns to identify with the story. Accordingly, when communicated consistently, this narrative of historical processes and outcomes can play an important part in affecting the image of Finland.

However, we argue that a nation cannot develop into a brand by relying only on one individual company or brand. Otherwise, there is a risk that, should the company fail, the country will fall. But stellar companies and brands can operate as benchmarks for others, and consequently, it will be easier for those others to globalize and succeed. If a nation – thanks to the benchmarks – is perceived as having attributes that carry over into other areas, then the brand image of individual companies becomes a factor in the image of that country (cf. O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2000).

In this chapter, we framed our research within an evolutionary approach that followed the rise of the Nokia brand as embedded in a wider institutional environment. We used historical data in the field of organization studies and chose this strategy because we intended to determine the relevance of the historical developments. They caused a shift in the centre of gravity; that is, in the role of place, from an emphasis on the "built environment" bound together through national Finnish "collective memories" to a concern for the emerging nature and development of Finland as a country within a globalized culture – as characterized by an interactive flow of ideas, information, values and tastes. Cell phones are used by millions of consumers across the world, and Nokia has played an important part, as the leading manufacturer, in product design, advertising, ancillary services and branding.

Possessing linking value, brands can operate as the carriers of a place's attributes and affect other cultures. McDonald's, for example, has influenced eating habits in many countries (Rindell 2008). Similarly, Nokia has affected ways of communicating all over the world. Cell phone usage has resulted in a new kind of "nomad", which has altered our human perception of the world. The ability to connect people renders us less concerned with boundaries and more intrigued by focal brands. So, in a way, Nokia has played an important role in the redefinition of the landscape, from "static space" to distributed and interconnected physical, digital and human networks of places and relationships ("connecting people") in the knowledge-based economy.

While Finnish social lives are still tied to particular notions of "place", it is obvious that these are being reconfigured, as a consequence of the Nokia icon, to include a wider network of individuals and institutions, physically located in very different places. In a networked society, it raises the issue that social relations are becoming more significant than the social units in selected nodes (place). It implies that corporate ties are increasingly maintained via the internet and the World Wide Web, and much less through social presence.

What may be the lesson to be learned from the Nokia–Finland symbiotic brand relationship? First, companies that explore the new human–machine "partnership" are likely to discover that increasingly interaction between humans, objects and devices lead to the creation of symbolic and cultural capital for industries and society alike. This observation implies that branding has another responsibility in our changing world: it is closely linked to the role of the nation state. In one way or another, commercial brands are increasingly performing the role of transmitting national culture, operating as agents of that culture.

To create an attractive image of a country, a balance must be maintained between its commercial and cultural elements (Anholt 2002). A nation should not rely on one company or industry or area of culture in its branding efforts. As the success of a company is not achieved overnight and, as in the case of Finland, there is no other Nokia in sight, new growth areas need to be developed. For Finland, one such sector can be education: in December 2009, the Finnish minister of education announced an idea of educational commodification and the export of Finnish education and know-how (Elonen 2009). Because of the success of Finnish schools in the Pisa rankings, many countries have contacted the Finnish educational authorities asking for advice and teacher training. This, again, is an example of the growing importance of the intangible elements in transmitting culture as well as defining and branding a place.

## NOTES

1. In English, the term "*sisu*" is translated as strength of will, determination, perseverance and acting rationally in the face of adversity. The word became popularized by the Finnish perseverance in the face of the invasion by the Soviet Union during the Winter War.
2. The *Kalevala* is credited with the inspiration for the national awakening that ultimately led to the Finnish government's independence from Russia in 1917.
3. The Winter War was a military conflict between the Soviet Union and Finland in 1939–40, lasting 105 days and bringing Finland international fame in a heroic tale of self-sacrificing defense. As an example of the strength of the troops, Finland had 32 tanks in comparison to the 6,500 Soviet tanks.
4. Finland has been a consistent top performer in all the focus areas of the Pisa test (collected data on students' knowledge, skills and competencies in reading, mathematics and science in 66 OECD countries) to date.

## CHAPTER 7

# Case B: Branding Nonmetropolitan Illinois – A Normative Decision Analysis

*Adee Athiyaman & Christopher D. Merrett*

## INTRODUCTION

An empirical fact about rural communities is that they tend to be branded by state officials as "escape destinations" for urban residents tired of city living. For example, the positioning statements of rural Illinois include themes such as "There's a Place outside Chicago called Illinois", and "Illinois: A Million Miles from Monday." Since this practice ignores the complexity of rural place identity, this chapter utilizes residents' perceptions to brand rural communities.

A common definition of branding is that it involves attaching a label (for identification) and meaning (for understanding) to a product, person or concept (Kotler and Armstrong 2008; Park *et al*. 1986). This conceptual definition suggests that the understanding or brand meaning could differ among market segments (for example, brand loyal customers, new users of the brand and so on). Hence, branding rural Illinois or non-metro Illinois involves identifying relevant market segments, exploring the mental associations that rural Illinois, as a brand, invokes in the minds of the market segments (Smith 2002), and (re)positioning the brand at a particular location within the segments' perceptual product space (Dillon *et al*. 1986).

In the first part of this chapter we utilize the functionalist paradigm (Kuhn 1970) to structure the task of branding nonmetropolitan Illinois. Our objective is to explicate strategies that influence target market segments to categorize counties in non-metro Illinois as an illustration of a category (for example, safe, friendly and so on).

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. The second section highlights the market segment that is the focus of the study. The third section presents the theoretical basis of the study: the development and/or maintenance

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of brand-meaning. The fourth section presents the empirical aspects or the methodology of the study, and finally, in the fifth section, the results of the research are discussed.

## MARKET SEGMENTS

Sociological theory suggests that non-metro counties could focus on two market segments: residents and visitors (Cohen 1984). However, a closer look at the two segments suggests that the utilities derived from living/visiting a non-metro county do not differ between the groups. To elaborate: consider the concept of "consumption" in tourism (Ryan and Page 2000). It is based on categorizing tourism demand into "pure" and "mixed" tourism products. Pure tourism products refer to goods and services consumed only by visitors (for example, hotel rooms) whereas mixed tourism products indicate goods and services consumed by both residents and visitors (for example, public transportation). Since non-metro counties primarily serve the interests of residents and visitors by providing universal, mixed-category services such as preservation-of-life services (police, fire, sanitation) and general welfare services (streets and transportation, parks and recreation and so on), we contend that county-initiated customer-value management does not differ between residents and visitors. Technically, the counties are product specialists: products are for sale to any customer (resident or visitor) who can afford to buy them (Pride and Ferrell 2008).

This kind of reasoning leads us to focus on county-level activities that shape the perceived value of the products experienced in the community. We develop this reasoning further in the next section.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Branding a community involves three interrelated decisions: (i) a macro-level decision about the category to which the community should belong – for example, recreational community; (ii) deciding on one or more benefits to highlight residents – for example, sports, live theatre and so on – a meso-tier decision; and (iii) a decision about attributes that underlie or correlate with the benefits – for example, a freshwater lake stocked with sports fish such as bass – a micro-level choice (Rossiter and Percy 1997).

The prescription for the macro category decision is that a community should position itself either centrally or differentially. A central strategy is recommended if the community is a prototypic one. Conceptually, a prototypic community would provide all required services to its members and thus would have a large population (see Tiebout 1956). An example of this would be Cook County in Illinois, which boasts a population of around 5.6 million people, and offers comprehensive public services ranging from animal control to veterans' assistance (see http://www.co.cook.il.us). A central strategy is also recommended for a "me-too" community that offers all the benefits of the market leader but at a lower cost. For example, DuPage County in Illinois would qualify for a me-too status since it is similar to Cook County in public service provision but has lower taxes (see http://www.city-data.com/). A differentiated strategy is recommended for all other communities. As an example, Carroll County in Illinois labels itself a recreational county. According to the county's website, "Its history, myriad points of interest and inherent natural beauty are just part of a wondrous, hidden treasure" (see http://www.gocarrollcounty.com/). Carroll County's description of its natural and scenic beauty supports our viewpoint that communities are not market specialists: they do not offer whatever products the residents want – rather, they possess a set of characteristics and use these to attract visitors and retain residents (product specialists).

Once the macro-level decision is made, it is necessary to decide on one or more benefits to emphasize (the meso-level decision). This involves analyzing the motives that drive people to live in (or visit) a community. Briefly, if a person resides in community *x* because it offers public transportation, then the person's decision is based on the reasoning that living in the community would remove commuting problems. On the other hand, if an opportunity for retail shopping is the benefit sought, then sensory gratification could be the motive for visiting the community. Note that motives dictate the types of benefits sought in the community. Put another way, motives are the "whys" of living in a community and benefits are "what" the residents want. Thus, for branding purposes, it is essential to identify the motives of the residents and the benefits they seek from the community.

Finally, we focus on one or more attributes that underpin the benefits, to highlight the "features" of the community. This is because, when a person moves to or visits a community, the benefits are not yet forthcoming, hence they are intangible. In this scenario, attributes, that are the objective features of the benefit should be highlighted to the resident (visitor) to positively reinforce his/her community choice (Thompson *et al.* 2005; Park *et al.* 1991).

Overall, then, we note that branding a community involves explaining why a resident or a visitor, with a particular motive such as social approval, should choose this particular community. The process begins with a "macro" location decision. Specifically, the decision is to locate the community in the customer's perceptual space, either centrally as one that offers all the benefits or differentially as a niche community. The next decision involves community-level benefits to emphasize in communications. Finally, the attributes that underlie or correlate with the focal benefits should be identified and highlighted in marketing communications.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the macro location strategy of non-metro counties, we content analyzed county websites to infer location strategy(ies). For example, the Lee County website (http://encounterleecounty.com/) highlights that it is located 90 minutes west of Chicago, and 60 minutes east of the Quad Cities. Therefore, we infer the macro location of the county as a "hub" county, which would benefit from a me-too location strategy. Next, we assessed the appropriateness of the classification using an external criterion. This criterion was derived from the postulates of categorization theory (see, for example, Estes 1995). Briefly, the theory states that one decides whether or not an object belongs to a category by assessing the object's similarity to the concept of interest. Applied to the problem at hand, we need one or more "features" that are relevant for central and differentiated strategies. The Beale codes (ERS 2003) were considered useful for this exercise: the relevant Beale code enables one to determine whether a rural county is within commuting distance of a metropolitan area. If it was, then we categorized the county as a "me-too" or a central-strategy county. If the county was not adjacent to a metropolitan area, then we classified it as differentiated. Correlation between the results of the content analysis and the Beale codes is expected to provide evidence towards the validity of the content analysis.

Measures related to motives, and county-specific attribute perceptions were obtained from a sample survey of residents in nonmetropolitan Illinois, the target population being all households in the nonmetropolitan counties. A simple random sampling procedure was employed to select 2,000 households from a mailing list purchased from a commercial database marketer. The mail survey procedure used an alert postcard informing potential respondents that a survey was being conducted and that they would soon be mailed a survey instrument, followed by a first mailing of the questionnaire with a cover note requesting cooperation. A reminder postcard was later sent, followed by mailing a second questionnaire to those who did not complete and return the first.

Table 7.1 lists the operational definitions of measures and provides examples of measures used in the study (Carnap 1946). While measures related to the motives are self-explanatory, the choice of attributes to assess

**TABLE 7.1 Measures of motivation and attribute perceptions**

| Concept | Definition | Examples of measures |
|---|---|---|
| Positive reinforcer | Behavior that results in "rewards". This is called drive increase in behavioral learning theory. | Family ties and friendships make this community special to me.<br>Measured on a 5-step "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree" scale |
| Negative reinforcer | Behavior that provides relief from a negative mental state (also called drive reduction in behavioral learning theory) | I can think of no other place to live where I could feel safer.<br>Measured on a 5-step "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree" scale |
| Attributes: Allocational services | Residents' perceptions about community services related to economically neutral areas such as police and fire. | Please show the extent to which you believe that your community provides:<br>• Law enforcement<br>• Parks and recreation<br>Measured on a 5-step "Not at all" to "Absolutely" scale |
| Attributes: Developmental services | Residents' perceptions about services aimed at improving the community's economic position. | Please show the extent to which you believe that your community provides:<br>• Retail shopping<br>• Entertainment . . .<br>Measured on a 5-step "Not at all" to "Absolutely" scale |

benefit perceptions needs some explanation. Briefly, Peterson (1981) posits that local governments are unable to manipulate in any significant way such contextual variables as air pollution or scenic beauty. Hence the focus is on changeable variables such as allocational or developmental variables (Nelson 1999; Peterson 1981). Allocational indicators include essential, but often economically neutral, services such as police, fire and sanitation. On the other hand, developmental services aim to improve the economic position of the community. Some examples of developmental variables include education and roads.

In research on local governments in Alabama, Baker (2003) identified a set of allocational and developmental variables considered essential for quality living. The list included items such as police, cable television and public transportation. The relevance of these variables for rural Illinois was assessed by an expert panel of academics (mostly rural sociologists and community economists) affiliated with a publicly funded rural research center. While the expert panel retained most of the items highlighted in Baker's study, the panel recommended including the following additional items in the questionnaire: Head Start programs, daycare services, senior centers and services, basic medical care services, mental health services, retail shopping, restaurants and entertainment.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire survey yielded 640 usable responses. The majority of the respondents were female (53 per cent), aged between 35 and 65 years (55 per cent), with a household income not exceeding $50,000 (67 per cent).

### Macro Location Decision

In which category should a nonmetropolitan county belong? Specifically, should a county position itself in customers' perceptual space, either centrally as one that offers all the benefits or differentially as a niche community? To address this question, we examined county websites for themes or associations that they emphasize. As shown in Table 7.2, the emphasis ranges from cozy, hub or bedroom community to historic and recreational county. We assume that hub, cozy, and bedroom communities want customers to perceive them as offering comprehensive services – a centralized strategy, while other themes, such as recreation, are assumed to denote strategies to differentiate the county. In terms of frequency, centralized strategy was emphasized by 46 per cent of the counties; differentiated strategy by 29 per cent of the counties; and 10 counties (25 per cent) neither had a website nor provided information about their location decision.

To understand the basis of the macro location decisions stated in the communities' websites, we cross-classified website themes with Beale code indicators of location. As mentioned earlier, if a county is within commuting distance to a metropolitan area (Beale codes 4, 6 and 8), we categorized the county as a "me-too" or a central-strategy county. If not, we classified the county as a differentiated one (Beale codes 5, 7 and 9). While 63 per cent of the counties that emphasize centralized location strategies are adjacent to a metropolitan area, a similar percentage (60 per cent) that emphasize differentiation strategies are also closer to a metropolitan area. In other words, the cross-validation suggests that the themes stated in the county websites do not correlate with the Beale-codes-based classification. One plausible explanation is that the themes abstracted from the content analysis are invalid. In other words, the methodology of the content analysis is suspect.

## TABLE 7.2 County-level brand associations

| County | Position emphasized in county website | Website visited |
|---|---|---|
| Bureau | Cozy county | http://www.bureaucounty.us/community.php |
| Carroll | Recreation county | http://www.gocarrollcounty.com/ |
| Christian | Website not available (see http://www.statelocalgov.net/state-il.cfm) | |
| Clay | Recreation county | http://www.claycountyillinois.org/ |
| Coles | Cozy county | http://www.co.coles.il.us/ |
| Cumberland | Website not available (see http://www.statelocalgov.net/state-il.cfm) | |
| Douglas | None provided | http://www.douglascountyil.com/home.html |
| Edgar | Website not available (see http://www.statelocalgov.net/state-il.cfm) | |
| Effingham | Cozy county | http://www.co.effingham.il.us/ |
| Ford | Cozy county | http://www.paxtonil.com/fordco.html |
| Franklin | Recreation county | http://www.fctb.com/index.shtml |
| Fulton | Recreation county | http://www.fultoncountytourism.org/ |
| Hancock | Cozy county | http://www.hancockcountyil.com/ |
| Iroquois | Hub county | http://www.co.iroquois.il.us/ |
| Jackson | None provided | http://www.jacksoncounty-il.gov/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1 |
| Jefferson | Hub county | http://www.southernillinois.com/ |
| Jo Davies | Cozy county | http://www.jodaviess.org/ |
| Knox | Hub county | http://www.visitgalesburg.com/ |
| LaSalle | None stated | http://www.lasallecounty.org/ |
| Lee | Hub county | http://www.encounterleecounty.com/ |
| Logan | Cozy county | http://www.co.logan.il.us/ |
| Macoupin | Bedroom community | http://www.macoupincountyil.gov/ |
| Marion | Website not available (see http://www.statelocalgov.net/state-il.cfm) | |
| Mason | Recreation county | http://www.masoncountyil.org/ |
| McDonough | Education county | http://www.macomb.com/index.html |
| Morgan | Historic county | http://www.morgancounty-il.com/ |
| Randolph | Historic county | http://www.randolphco.org/gov/index.cfm |
| Richland | Website not available (see http://www.statelocalgov.net/state-il.cfm) | |
| Saline | Recreation county | http://www.shawneetourism.com/ |
| Stephenson | Hub county | http://www.stephenson-county-il.org/ |
| Vermilion | Recreation county | http://www.co.vermilion.il.us/ |
| Warren | Cozy county | http://www.warrencountyil.com/ |
| Wayne | Website not available (see http://www.statelocalgov.net/state-il.cfm) | |
| Whiteside | Hub county | http://www.whiteside.org/ |
| Williamson | Hub county | http://www.wctb.org/ |

*Note*: Two judges coded the websites independently. The results of the coding process revealed an 88% agreement between the coders (n = 35). Inter-coder reliability based on the $I_r$ index works out to 0.89 (Perrault and Leigh 1989). The 95% CI bounds for the $I_r$ are 0.91 and 0.87.

However, since we followed established principles of content analysis such as: (i) using frequency counts to identify words of potential interest; and (ii) utilizing the keyword-in-context approach to categorization, we presume that methodological error in content analysis is nil or negligible (Riffe *et al*. 2005).

A theoretical reason for the anomaly would be that these financially-strapped rural counties, on average, do not think about macro location strategies but focus more on the meso and micro levels. For example, the product-specialist nature of the counties may influence them to focus on their niche (see the Carroll county example discussed earlier) rather than be everything to everyone. Warner and Hefetz (2008) provide empirical evidence in this direction.

### Meso-Level Motives–Benefits Analyses

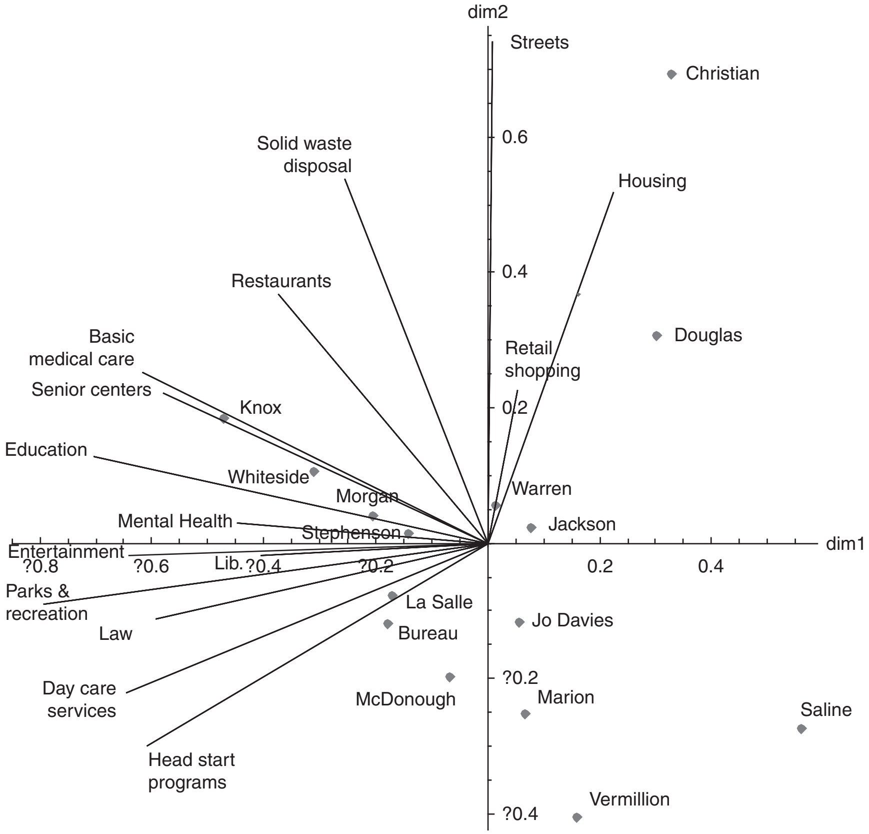
What motive connects a county to the market segments? In other words, is it “drive reduction” (negative reinforcement) or “drive increase” (positive reinforcement) that energizes customers to seek a community in which to live/to visit? County-wise analyses suggest that fifteen of the thirty-five counties (43 per cent) should focus on benefits related to drive-increase motives and the rest (twenty counties, or 57 per cent) should focus on benefits related to both drive increase and drive reduction.

Since motives dictate benefits sought, we analyzed benefit perceptions for each of the two groups separately using dimension reduction techniques. Specifically, a principal component analysis of the allocation/development attributes revealed that preservation of life, and general welfare are the benefits sought by customers seeking positive reinforcement. On the other hand, customers who act on both positive and negative reinforcers desire quality of life that includes both public enlightenment and happiness.

## COUNTIES, BENEFITS AND ATTRIBUTES IN RESIDENTS’ PERCEPTUAL SPACE

Figure 7.1 shows the perceptual map of the fifteen counties that are viewed by respondents as positive reinforcers. The map depicts the two factors or benefits (preservation of life and general welfare) and each of the fifteen attributes is plotted as a vector in the plane. The locations of the counties are also shown. The distances between counties indicate similar benefit perceptions. Thus, LaSalle and Bureau are perceived to offer similar benefits, while Vermilion and Christian are perceived to be dissimilar in benefits

**FIGURE 7.1** ▌**Perceptual map: positive reinforcement motive**



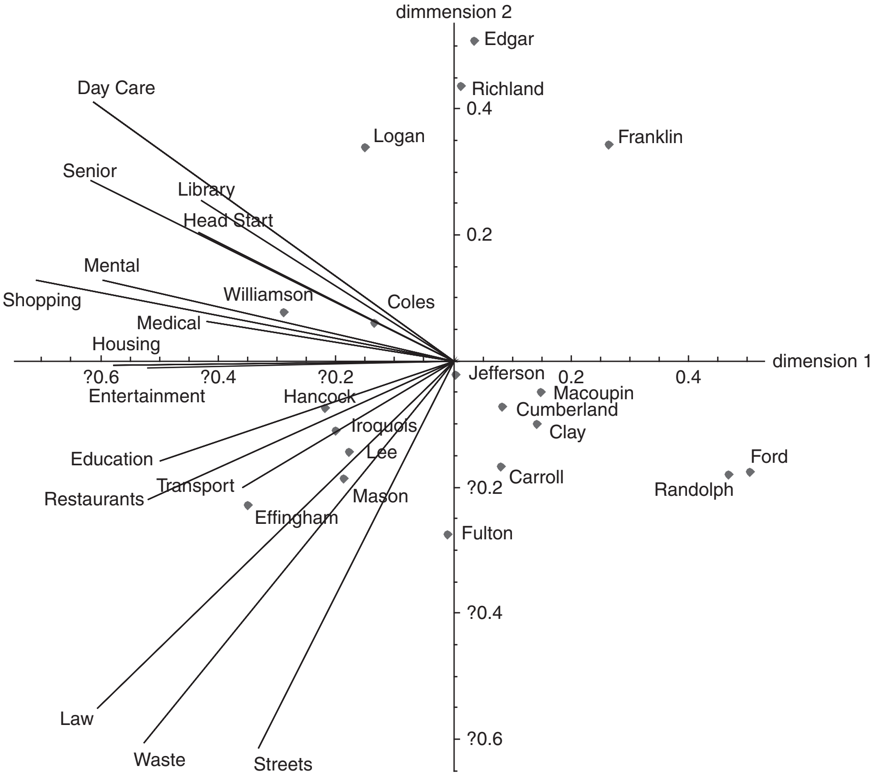
*Note*: Dimensions: 1 = preservation of life; 2 = general welfare.

delivery. Overall, Christian County is perceived as offering better general welfare benefits, while Christian, Douglas and Saline counties are thought to be better preservation-of-life (service) providers.

Finally, we focus on perceptions relevant for both the drive reduction and the drive increase motives (Figure 7.2). The figure highlights the need for communities such as Effingham and Fulton to reassess their branding strategies. Specifically, it is suggested that each of these communities emphasize its best or unique benefits, mention its equal benefits, and trade off or omit its inferior benefits (Bettman 1979).

Consider the case of Jo Davies County. It has a positive ranking in the "preservation-of-life services" dimension (see Figure 7. 1). Therefore, the

**FIGURE 7.2 Perceptual map: positive and negative (reinforcements) motives**



*Note*: Dimensions: 1 = overall quality of life; 2 = general welfare.

county should emphasize – that is, focus at least two-thirds of its communications with the residents (Rossiter 1996), on the excellence of the preservation-of-life services in the county. And what should Jo Davies county do about "inferior" benefit perceptions? It should focus on attributes that drive those benefit perceptions. Specifically, attributes in which the county performs well should be highlighted as evidence of good benefits in the deficient areas.

To elaborate, an examination of attributes associated with the general welfare dimension suggests that the state of repair of streets is important for "general welfare" benefit perceptions. Jo Davies performs well in streets facilities compared to other counties in the region. This differential performance suggests that the county should follow an attribute-to-benefit approach in highlighting its general welfare benefits. In other words, communications should highlight to residents that Jo Davies County is a residential haven that offers excellent preservation of life services and streets.

This type of communication would facilitate vigilant processing of information about the "street" attribute, not the overall "general welfare" benefit (Lane and Keaveney 2005). Our prescriptions are based on the assumption of a "passive" resident audience. In other words, since residents experience community services continually, they become habituated or passive recipients of service. In this situation, exposure to marketing communications would easily impact on and rearrange cognitive structures (see Smith and Swinyard 1982; Sujan and Bettman 1989; Tuan Pham and Muthukrishnan 2002 for evidence on this).

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted that branding a nonmetropolitan county involves recognizing what is *perceived* by the residents, not necessarily what *exists*. While the perceptual analysis offers insight into branding rural Illinois, it also possesses limitations. To begin with, the analysis is confined to existing residents. If the interest is in attracting new residents, then the approach has to be extended to potential residents or visitors to the area. In other words, it is recommended that the approach employed in this chapter be implemented with various target groups such as "the young", and "the elderly" who are potential residents.

## CHAPTER 8

# Case C: Creating Desert Islands – Abu Dhabi

*Geert Reitsma & Stephen E. Little*

### CONTEXT

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) covers an area of 83,600 sq km (77,600 sq km excluding its islands). The UAE's emergence followed the United Kingdom's announcement of its withdrawal from its commitments "East of Suez" in 1968. In 1969, Abu Dhabi and Dubai agreed on a union which formed the nucleus of the UAE at its establishment in 1971 (Govers and Go 2009). The vast majority of the UAE area is uninhabited desert. The Emirate of Abu Dhabi is the largest of the seven emirates within the confederation and accounts for more than 85 per cent of the total land mass of the UAE. Abu Dhabi is the country's capital, the seat of the federal government and the richest of the emirates as a result of its abundant natural resources. Dubai is the second largest of the emirates and the leading commerce and tourism center. Other principal towns include Al Ain, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain and Fujairah. Abu Dhabi lies on a T-shaped island jutting into the Persian Gulf from the central western coast, part of an archipelago of 200 islands within the emirate. Other islands, such as Sir Bani Yas and Dalma, are located approximately 250 km west of Abu Dhabi and 100 km east of the border with Saudi Arabia. These have played a historic role in the evolution and growth of the southern Arabian Gulf as a trading center.

### POPULATION

The population of both Abu Dhabi and Dubai has shown considerable expansion in recent years as a result of economic development and growth. The UAE's Ministry of Economy projects the combined population of Abu Dhabi and Dubai in 2015 to be in the region of 5 million, double the current population for both emirates. Because of the reliance on the inward migration of appropriately skilled workers at all levels, only one million of

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these, approximately 20 percent of the total, will be of Emirati nationality (UAE Ministry of Economy 2009). The dynamic population mix presents a challenge to the maintenance of cultural context and identity, which echoes Anderson's (1983) challenge to simplistic views of national identity.

## ECONOMY

The Gulf has since the year 2000 experienced a period of unprecedented economic growth and development. Recent economic and financial events have had an impact on the region, but prospects for regional growth during the next five to ten years are positive despite the international environment. The UAE's GDP per capita was US$39,077 in 2008, with crude oil production accounting for approximately 35 percent (UAE Ministry of Economy 2009). The contribution of oil revenue is expected to decrease, reflecting the emphasis that in recent years has been placed on diversification into sectors such as manufacturing, tourism and construction. There will also be a movement towards a common market and uniform currency with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) partners, which will further benefit regional commerce and tourism. The GCC monitors and coordinates regional policy among the Arab states of the Gulf region.

## DUBAI

Although Dubai's economy was built on the back of the oil industry, crude oil production accounts for less than 6 percent of the emirate's revenues because of the lack of natural reserves (Dubai Chamber 2007). Since the 1970s, Dubai has invested hugely in the infrastructure for commerce by developing clusters of free zones to provide foreign companies with the unrestricted import of labor and export capital. Since the 1990s, Dubai has been very successful in real estate development, business, aviation, logistics, trade and tourism, until the economic downturn at the end of 2008 hit the country, leaving the emirate with a foreign debt of approximately US$100 billion (this figure is rumored among UAE expatriates and in the international press, but uncorroborated, so it is unclear whether this is exaggerated or just the tip of the iceberg). The success story of brand Dubai, which was built "overnight", has been documented by Govers and Go (2009).

## ABU DHABI

Since Abu Dhabi had greater natural resources than Dubai, there was less pressure to diversify the economy and the city's development was less focused on attracting foreign investment. Abu Dhabi's current strategy is aimed at strengthening its position as the UAE's capital and center of international business and tourism, but more closely themed around heritage, culture and sustainability. Abu Dhabi enjoys a second mover's advantage (Rogers 1983) by being able to learn from Dubai's example and to select those elements judged to be most relevant to the emirate's needs.

This has resulted in a more balanced approach to development and place branding, moving beyond purely market-driven practices to include socio-environmental concerns – equity, in addition to effectiveness and efficiency – is refreshing for the region and creates unique opportunities for innovation.

For example, among the most striking features of Dubai's development are the artificial island developments which began with the Palm Jumeirah. These have been designed to dramatically increase the length of available coastline from 70 km to 1,500 km and to create land for prime development (Govers and Go 2009). Abu Dhabi, while having created the relatively modest (6 sq km) Lulu Island, is able to exploit natural islands of significant natural and historical interest to the region.

The strategic choices of Abu Dhabi reflect the growing global interest in sustainability and lower-impact forms of development in all areas, including tourism.

In 2007 the government released *Plan Abu Dhabi 2030: Urban Structure Framework Plan*, reflecting a clear move toward environmental conservation and the use of the natural environment in defining Abu Dhabi as a place to live. To ensure sustainable economic growth, the government and developers such as Aldar and TDIC initiated *Estidama*, meaning sustainability in Arabic, a sustainable buildings and communities program providing guidelines and a comprehensive Pearl Rating System (PRS) to reduce its high consumption rates of energy and materials, and encourage world-class practices for sustainable development. The key project for Abu Dhabi's ambitions is the new Capital District as the UAE's seat of power and government, and the world's first zero-carbon, zero-waste and car-free city known as Masdar City. Similar developments have been proposed in several other countries, not least China (Lee and Mabey 2008), where a programme of low carbon urban developments includes Shenzhen, the fast-growing industrial center of southern China (*People's Daily* 2010).

Leisure tourism is, compared to Dubai, still at an early stage in developing the tourism infrastructure to attract and accommodate this market, specifically targeting families and couples from within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the general international marketplace. This is likely to change as projects are realized, new hotels open and marketing gains traction. Major projects are Saadiyat Island as the cultural district, with the Louvre Museum and Guggenheim, and Yas Island with a motorsports track for Formula One, Ferrari theme park and seven resorts. Other ambitious projects include the artificial Lulu Island and the Desert Islands.

## THE DESERT ISLANDS

Abu Dhabi's Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC), the state-owned master developer of major leisure, residential and tourism destinations within the area, identified eight islands located 200 kilometres south-west of Abu Dhabi City as a future tourism destination. The Desert Islands destination will combine an abundance of natural attractions, culture and wildlife and offer a range of possibilities for tourism and lifestyle real estate development.

The project was conceived in the mid-1980s by the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan and TDIC in order to showcase the unique cultural and natural heritage of the Islands and wider emirates. Desert Islands aims to become the UAE's symbol of sustainability to the world and plays an important role in diversifying and widening the tourism product offering in Abu Dhabi. It will be developed alongside Abu Dhabi's major projects like the new cultural district Saadiyat Island, the Formula One racetrack and Ferrari theme park on Yas Island and zero carbon, zero-waste and car-free Masdar City.

TDIC's mission to create Desert Islands as a viable ecotourism destination presents a number of environmental challenges, related to the harsh climatic conditions, the islands' fragile ecology and their unique geology. Furthermore, the complexity of the project and the inheritance of Sheikh Zayed's legacy demand TDIC's long-term determination, exceeding its original role as a real-estate developer with wildlife maintenance, air and maritime transit, logistic island operations and habitat creation. It shows how the construction and safeguarding of an authentic and trustworthy place brand can be challenging.

### Inheriting an Island

The Desert Islands are located in the Arabian Gulf some 6 km from the mainland UAE at Jabel Dhanna and comprises the former royal nature reserve of Sir Bani Yas Island, Dalma Island and the Discovery Islands – six nearby offshore outcrops. In addition, Marsa Jabel Dhanna is a reclaimed peninsula extending for 2 km and containing basic marina facilities and infrastructure. It is the current embarkation point for Desert Islands.

The island of Sir Bani Yas Island is approximately 13 km in length and 9 km wide, and is the biggest of the Desert Islands. Sir Bani Yas Island was first mentioned in European literature around 1590, when the Venetian jeweller Gasparo Balbi listed “Sirbeniast” as an island around which pearls were often found (King 2001). It was also described in some detail during the 1820s and 1850s by British naval officers who were surveying the lower Gulf waters.

Geologists report that Jebel Wahid – the island’s central salt dome – was not always surrounded by water. Towards the end of the last ice age, the sea level in the Gulf was considerably lower than the present day and much of the present day sea bed linking Sir Bani Yas to the mainland was above the high water mark. Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey (ADIAS) has extracted evidence of people living in the area approximately 6,000 to 7,000 years ago. Around thirty-seven archaeological sites are have been found on the island. The most important find was a Nestorian church and monastery, discovered in the mid-1990s. The Nestorian faith is Christian and has its origins in modern Turkey and Syria. Its missionaries travelled across Persia, India, Central and East Asia, and even as far as China. The presence of such a historic site provides considerable evidence of the role that Sir Bani Yas played as a transit point and trading center between the Arabian Gulf and the Near and Far East.

## “Arabian Ark”

To the Emiratis, Sir Bani Yas is the island of Sheikh Zayed, the founder of the United Arab Emirates and a founding “father” of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The island is the place where Sheikh Zayed built a palace, created a wildlife sanctuary for endangered species from within the region and declared a marine reserve around the coastline in order to conserve and protect marine resources, resulting in the abundance of dolphin, dugong, whale shark and so on. The island became known as the “Arabian Ark”.

The current coastline of the island has been adjusted as a result of reclamation that has been ongoing since 1971. Originally, the island was surrounded by a natural coral reef, but the edge of the reclaimed area is now aligned with the edge of the reef. Material from the reclamation was sourced predominantly from the central salt dome of the island, with the surface layer consisting of dredged material from the adjacent marine environment. As a result, the reclaimed land is highly saline and therefore not well suited to the establishment of vegetation. Even though the irrigation within parts of the reclaimed areas is switched off, the island-wide use of water for irrigation is not sustainable at approximately 8 million gallons of water per day. The remaining vegetation within the reclaimed area is largely dead and presents a major aesthetic problem, which is exacerbated by the regimented grid in which the trees have been planted. The reclamation program has also contributed to areas of the coastline being unstable, particularly in the west and north-east, where high seas and strong winds predominate during the winter months.

### Salt Dome

A central salt dome (Jebel Wahid) with peaks reaching approximately 130 metres above sea level forms a dramatic focus. This elevated area offers excellent vistas for general viewing, the creation of viewing platforms over wildlife gathering points, and lodge development. The salt dome is surrounded by foothills which gradually give way to the coastal plain. The north-eastern seaboard of the island offers the only remaining natural beach. The reclamation program has resulted in extensive saline stretches, with artificial beaches and lagoons on the eastern seaboard between the main harbor in the south and the natural beach in the north. The island is home to an abundance and diversity of birds and wild animals, including endangered species such as the Arabian oryx, gazelle, llama, rhea, giraffe and ostrich.

### Handover

Tourism on Sir Bani Yas started when Sheikh Zayed opened his island to the public at weekends and authorized the development of a guest house in the north of the Island which was subsequently developed by TDIC into the Desert Islands Resort and Spa (with 64 letting rooms) and is operated by Thai hospitality operator Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas.

After the death of Sheikh Zayed in 2004, TDIC took over responsibility for the overall island management including the wildlife park, breeding programs, airstrip and maintenance of woodlands, coastal edges and lagoons. Coastal stability is a particular concern, as a result of the extensive land reclamations, with unnatural coastal profiles predominating and a distinct lack of natural erosion control measures. TDIC has placed large sand-filled sacks to maintain the beach in front of the Desert Islands Resort and Spa, and is planning to reinforce existing unstable groynes to stop the ongoing erosion of beaches.

## CREATING AN ISLAND EXPERIENCE

### Vision

TDIC's objective is not only to maintain the island as Sheikh Zayed left it, but to recreate Sir Bani Yas as part of Desert Islands: a keynote tourism and sustainability project with a strong position in the domestic and regional marketplace. On a regional level, Desert Islands is intended to form a catalyst for tourism and economic initiatives in the otherwise poorly represented western region of Abu Dhabi and will complement adjacent tourism projects within the Abu Dhabi metropolitan area. Mutually beneficial tourism packages and positioning of Desert Islands as a unique tourism experience will help to achieve development aims. TDIC has envisioned Desert Islands as a range of experiences and attractions, in combination with resorts and serviced residential developments. Each island will be individually developed.

## Market Demand

Desert Islands is expected to attract local and regional demand for resort accommodation and private real estate, available to Emirati nationals only. The real estate will have considerable appeal to nationals because of the cultural and heritage significance of Sir Bani Yas Island. The market demand for resorts consists of expatriates, business travellers and international tourists. Expatriates form the vast majority of the UAE population. Expatriate vacations and weekend breaks within the Gulf are growing rapidly and will continue to do so as the population increases. Another upcoming trend is the corporate "retreat" type of events held in locations such as the desert, the mountains and the coast.

In order to attract these markets, a diversity of accommodation types, standards and prices is required. It is likely that expatriate travel patterns (weekends and public holidays) will have implications for access and transport to and from the islands. Management responses are required to overcome peak travel demand issues.

## Programming

Residential villas and a town center along new and existing canals will be developed near the royal palace on the south side of Sir Bani Yas. Large resorts will be developed along the remaining natural beach with a new marina and town center, aimed at international tourists. The resorts will service a number of lodges, each with a maximum size of 50 letting rooms and strategically placed in the prime natural environments of the island, ensuring sufficient space and habitat to support free-roaming wildlife. A visitor center will be built, with a museum relating to the legacy of Sheikh Zayed and his vision for the island. An alliance with Masdar is being created to provide the developments with up to 80 percent renewable energy. No cars will be allowed on the island, apart from service needs and wildlife tours. Native animals will be relocated into a 3,500-hectare Arabian Wildlife Park and non-native animals into a smaller Safari Park. The existing Desert Islands Resort and Spa will be extended with a conference center and diving center. The current runway at the airfield will be upgraded to a fully functioning airport with direct flights from Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The Desert Islands Education Centre will be developed on Dalma Island to foster community understanding and involvement in the tourism industry, agricultural and fishery activities. Two of the six uninhabited Discovery Islands will be developed as low-impact eco resorts, with the remaining four uninhabited islands being retained as avian and marine breeding sanctuaries. Marsa Jabel Dhanna, the mainland arrival and departure point for marine transfers to Desert Islands, will contain arrival and departure jetties, a hotel and a commuter parking area.

## Phasing

The program and development strategy that has been proposed reflects the need to be sensitive in relation to the environment; it is phased and will maintain and enhance the strengths of the islands. The range of experiences has been tailored to meet the requirements of diverse target markets, from Emiratis through international tourists and day visitors. This will make the islands accessible to all.

The first and main cluster of developments on Sir Bani Yas Island will accommodate a target population of approximately 5,500 guests, 6,500 residents and 8,500 workers, staff and their families by 2020. Phased density will create the critical mass necessary to service resorts and attractions, resulting in vibrant, liveable and economically successful communities on the islands. In addition, a workable population mix is required. This means ensuring that adequate staff and workers are provided on the island to service resort and residential communities and to undertake ongoing logistical tasks.

Community facilities are required to service anticipated visitor, resident, staff and worker populations on Sir Bani Yas Island. Such facilities include health care, education, religious, emergency and essential services, and leisure and recreation amenities, and will contribute to the creation of an attractive environment in which to live, visit and work. For marketing reasons, some of the community facilities near the resorts and residential areas will be buffered to retain their exclusive character.

## LESSONS FROM DESERT ISLANDS

Tourism as a commodity is an ever-expanding sector. The success of individual tourism destinations is defined by their daily, seasonal or annual longevity and economic sustainability. The example of Desert Islands shows how tourism can be considered as an economic driver and diversification tool, as a job engine and unrestricted trade good, as a tool to preserve cultural heritage sites and ecological areas, and as an instrument for revival and upgrading of the local environment and infrastructure.

Existing Gulf tourism real estate has focused primarily on urban development and reclamation works. Desert Islands is automatically differentiated by the project's *island factor*, its distinctive royal heritage in combination with the Arabian Wildlife Park, education and breeding centers, wildlife safaris and related attractions. The volume and scale of the wildlife viewing experience on the islands is unique and provides a solid base upon which to expand the place brand appeal utilizing the Arabian Ark theme.

The product offering overall is not easy to replicate and therefore any reduction in tourism activity as a result of economic circumstances could reduce the target market and its spending power, but should not affect the success of the project in the long term. Another advantage is its proximity to Abu Dhabi metropolitan area and a base of Emirati residents on which to draw.

Desert islands are a potent Western stereotype, though the term refers to their lack of human habitation rather than their desert location or environment. William Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* written in 1610 and set on an enchanted desert island, was preceded by two Arab representations. These are the first novels known to be set on a desert island, and are known in the West by the name of their Latin translations – Philosophus Autodidactus, written by Ibn Tufail (1105–85), and Theologus Autodidactus, written by Ibn al-Nafis (1213–88). The protagonists in both narratives reflect the situation of Shakespeare's Miranda, in that they are feral children living in seclusion on a deserted island, until they eventually come in contact with castaways from the outside world (bin Tufail, 1982; Mahdi, 1974).

In many regions, island resorts are rebranding as eco resorts, and mainland resorts are seeking eco credentials, including ecological certification for major 5-star hotel chains. Hickman (2007) criticizes the wider negative consequences of narrowly assessed "ecological tourism" projects and the concept is in danger of dilution. Nevertheless, while there are a few direct competitors of the Desert Islands within the Gulf region, none offers such a strong legacy component and the unique wildlife and marine platform that will be created there. This provides an excellent base upon which to develop a unique experience.

Desert Island shows how a larger context can be captured when a location decision is made on the positioning of a hotel or resort. The location maximizes the tourist experience through the interpretation of the qualities of place. This is generally reinforced through the journey to a specific destination. With Desert Islands, the legacy of Sheikh Zayed adds to the experience.

One of TDIC's key instruments has been place branding. From the moment TDIC took over Sir Bani Yas Island, Desert Islands has been marketed, via a dedicated website and extensive advertising programme, as an exclusive yet sustainable ecotourism destination. The image of Desert Island that has been communicated on the internet has been used by TDIC and Anantara to brand the existing Desert Island Resort and Spa. However, it has created false expectations, since the virtual image is years ahead of the actual development.

As a result of past activities on Sir Bani Yas and the fact that it is an island, there are aspects of development that will create challenges for the achievement of total compliance with sustainability targets established by Estidama. For example, it will not be possible to avoid the use of potable water for irrigation because of the presence of large areas of trees to be maintained. Nevertheless, TDIC aims to optimize the sustainability of the island within these constraints and its vision for the island.

Another misunderstanding is the concept of ecotourism. Many destinations increasingly use the term as a marketing tool without making reference to the ethos of the activity, as demonstrated by Hickman (2007). Desert Islands is not an ecotourism destination along the lines of the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador, Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania or the Okavango Delta in Botswana, and any attempt to promote it as such is likely to be unsustainable. The reintroduced species and reinstated environment put the Desert Island project in the same category as resources such as the Krugersdorp Game Reserve in Gauteng, South Africa, or Lady Elliot Island on Australia's Great Barrier Reef. The former is an area close to Johannesburg that has been reinstated as natural African veldt, with the appropriate range of wildlife reintroduced and protected as a tourist resource, while the latter is a cay leveled by a century of guano extraction that has been reinstated as an ecotourism facility.

However, in addition, Sir Bani Yas Island offers a unique combination of natural and cultural heritage, with the continuing archaeological investigation of its place in the human settlement of the Gulf and of the establishment of the region's trading tradition in parallel with the creation and conservation of its representative wildlife.

While the range of tourism projects in Abu Dhabi is more restricted than the wide range of facilities and developments in Dubai, there are potential contradictions within the portfolio with the inclusion of external cultures in imported world museum brands, and the celebration of automotive technology alongside zero-carbon developments. The Desert Islands provide a brand that combines recovery and restoration with the continuity of a human presence in the region.

Sir Bani Yas Island and the others islands contain surviving environmental features of significant value such as the rare salt dome and coastal lagoons, but over the years many natural features have been compromised through former management actions such as land reclamation, fragmentation of wadi systems and the quarrying of rock from the salt dome. Large numbers of grazing animals have significantly reduced areas of native desert vegetation to inaccessible areas, and widespread tree planting has required significant volumes of irrigation water to be utilized.

Nevertheless, TDIC aims to optimize the sustainability of the future developments and ensure the protection and enhancement of the unique natural systems present within these constraints and vision for the Desert Islands. The integrated, comprehensive approach to the project shows how TDIC, as the master developer, has evolved from an original role as a real-estate developer into operations such as wildlife maintenance, air and maritime transit, logistic island and hotel management, and habitat creation. The challenges on the ground, as well as in the process of place branding, are evident. However, compared to developments in Dubai, for example, the broader and more balanced perspective to development in Abu Dhabi has also clearly created opportunities for innovation.

## CHAPTER 9

# Case D: In the Shadow of Bangalore – Place Branding and Identity for Chennai

*Stephen E. Little*

### A GLOBAL CONTEXT FOR PLACE BRANDING

Across the world, individual cities are striving for visibility at the first tier of their nation's urban regions. In the high-growth economies, new competitors are emerging to challenge the existing first tier of cities for a place in the global economy. Such dynamic metropolitan areas have been identified as the nodes in an economy of flows (Castells 1987) and the location of creative and artistic sectors that enhance inward migration and economic development (Florida 2002; Markusen and King 2003).

For urban and regional governments, the economic downturn current at the time of writing raises the question of what drivers will trigger a sustainable recovery. With the growing appreciation of the emerging economic power of both China and India (Winters and Yusuf 2007) there is also a growing consensus that these countries will deliver one route out of recession for the global economy through the development of their domestic demand for goods and services. To sustain the previous record growth rates as the leading cities of the first wave of globalization become increasingly congested and lose their absolute cost advantages, the economic engagement of second- and third-tier cities in this global system is essential. This means foreign and national direct investment, which in turn requires a presence and appropriate image in the national and intentional consciousness of potential inward investors and migrants. This implies a key role for tourism in developing a cultural footprint to support the necessary image development and place branding projects. Tourism infrastructure can support developments in other sectors directly; however, it can also enhance the attractiveness and identity of a location by providing the direct exposure to that location that is needed to dispel stereotypes. Nevertheless, stereotypes are powerful and persistent.

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This prospect of an Asian-led recovery derives in part from the genuine need for substantial infrastructure projects to sustain the future development of both India's and China's national economies as second- and third-tier cities are drawn into the growth economy. These projects include road, rail and air transportation – which are also relevant to internal labor market development and the return migration encouraged by central government policies in both India and China.

In common with many large and well-established cities, Chennai (formerly Madras), is facing increasing economic competition, both domestically and internationally. This chapter presents the range of challenges to the development of a brand which conveys both contemporary capacities and the historical richness of the roots of these capabilities.

In India, Bangalore has come to represent the new India that is emerging after decades of economic liberalization leading up to World Trade Organization (WTO) accession in 1995. However, there is a danger that new stereotypes of India will simply replace old ones from the period of economic self-sustaining policies, with the new stereotypes being based on the successful sectors of Bangalore.

On both regional and global scales, competition for attention is intense. Bangalore in turn faces competition from regions adjacent to the Union's capital, Delhi – Gurgaon and Noida – and from smaller innovative clusters in Pune and Hyderabad. A report on investment opportunities in China identifies 274 cities with populations of more than one million (CBBC 2008). This compares with just twenty-three in India. For many of the Chinese cities, achieving any prominence within or outside their country is problematic. Few have achieved any presence in western consciousness dominated as this is by images from the Shanghai and Guangzhou regions. With a lower level of urbanization, the larger Indian cities enjoy more prominence nationally and internationally, but are still caught in an increasingly competitive framework, as can be seen in Chennai's role as the smallest top-tier city, with growing competition from second-tier Bangalore and Hyderabad.

In seeking to reposition themselves, city and regional governments are in danger of simplistic copy-cat responses that seek to emulate the success of leading centers. A lack of understanding of the subtleties behind successful science has been identified (Massey and Wield 1992; Castells and Hall 1994). And in relation to tourism management, Carson and Taylor (2009) refer to a self-inflicted flattening of the image of Australian Outback destinations through a simple repetition of the same formulation. An agreed understanding of a strong historical and cultural framework is one key to the maintenance of a genuine differential between locations.

## THE INDIAN CONTEXT OF BRANDING FOR CHENNAI

India's present engagement with the world economy follows decades of economic liberalization leading to WTO accession, and the city brand most identified with this "New India" is Bangalore through its global presence in IT and service outsourcing. The four first-tier cities of Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai have been challenged by Bangalore's new international profile. Delhi is the Union capital of the federal state, Mumbai the key financial center, and Kolkata the former colonial capital. Chennai is the smallest of the big four and the first center with a significant European presence on the subcontinent. Other second-tier cities, including Hyderabad and Pune, are also establishing a wider presence in the global economy.

Chennai is the capital of Tamil Nadu and home to the Tamil movie industry, which is second only to the Mumbai industry within India. Its commercial and administrative history spans two millennia and offers a strong base to enhance its identity through metropolitan tourism.

Key local features of value to the development of a differentiated brand are the world's second-longest urban beach and the historic Fort St. George complex, the site of the eighteenth-century foundation of the European core of the city. Rao *et al.* (2001) show that the historical consciousness of South India long pre-dates the arrival of European influence. The adjacent nineteenth-century administrative buildings are the seat of much of the modern administration of the state of Tamil Nadu and this overlay typifies the richness of the city and the region's history and culture, which includes an early connection with Christianity and the coexistence of Hindu and Muslim traditions.

As a conurbation of some 7.6 million people, and the administrative capital of a state of 66 million, the task of branding Chennai is similar to that of branding a medium-sized country. Caldwell and Friere (2004) differentiate between country and region or city branding, but the size of Tamil Nadu means that it is subject to the national and subnational pressures identified by Camilleri and Falk (1992) in their analysis of the constraints on nation states. The subnational pressures within India can be seen in the continuing controversy over the potential division of the state of Andhra Pradesh to create a new state of Telangana around the growing center of Hyderabad. Such tensions are a likely product of continuing rapid development, where unevenness is perceived as the result of relative neglect and emphasize the need to align local aspirations with a national perspective to retain the "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) of the national state.

To secure the branding objectives set out by Gnoth (2002) a portfolio approach is required. In this respect, the policies for Chennai must draw on the national brand while acknowledging and developing the local elements from within its region. The wider claims for the cultural richness of the whole subcontinent, for example, must be translated into the context of Tamil culture and its traditional expression through performance arts and their modern counterpart in the thriving Tamil movie industry – “Kollywood”.

A combination of cultural and economic resources must be developed to support the consistent communication of brand identity, both internally and externally. Hankinson (2002) develops a model from de Chertonay (1993) in which internal and external brand identities are combined to deliver consistent brand communication. However, for Chennai, three levels of brand development – local, conurbation and national – must be structured to face a set of separate but related audiences. The city is competing for prominence and resources within the national state of India, so the total brand portfolio must address an intra-national audience. Equally, the global competition for foreign direct investment and talent requires engagement with an international constituency. In addition, there is the local audience of the city and its associated region, which must identify with the brand image for it to be effective. The challenge is one of coordinating multiple stakeholders and partners to achieve the necessary public buy-in for each level of representation.

De Chertanoy (1993) identifies functionality – the satisfaction of performance needs, and representationality – the satisfaction of personal expression, as key complementary dimension of brands. In destination branding, representationality can be identified in the culture and identity associated with a location. For Chennai, the functionality resides in the economic activities of the city and region, and their supporting physical and intangible infrastructure.

## CHENNAI’S ECONOMIC PORTFOLIO

Chennai’s brand functionality resides in a number of areas of substantial economic activity, some of which can be seen as follower responses to success in other locations within India. A “cyberport” has been established at the site of the local movie studios, and IT services are offered by a number of firms of varying sizes within the city. Key support is delivered to overseas companies, particularly in the USA. However, Chennai also has its distinctive presence in other sectors, with its highest manufacturing profile being in the automotive industry.

### The “Detroit of South Asia”

Chennai has its own tradition and identity in manufacturing, with evidence of global competitiveness in the achievement of the Japanese-sponsored

Deming quality award by local companies. The technical sophistication of indigenous products has benefited from incoming technology though foreign investment, such as the Delphi–TVS joint venture manufacturing diesel fuel injection equipment for a wide range of vehicle types. Delphi is the largest automotive supplier in the world, and TVS the largest automotive systems supplier in India. The company is the successor to the Lucas–TVS joint venture established in 1961 and was awarded the 2004 Deming Application Award by the Deming Prize Committee of the Japanese Union of Scientists and Engineers (JUSE).

The initial limited range of joint ventures in place at the beginning of economic liberalization has been supplemented by greatly expanded foreign direct investment in auto manufacturing. Investment has come from auto makers such as Hyundai, Ford, Renault-Nissan and BMW. All have expanded their investment in Chennai, along with established national player Ashok Leyland. Nevertheless, the growing automotive sector in Chennai faces strong national competition from both Pune and Gurgaon, where DaimlerChrysler AG and Volkswagen AG, and Maruti Suzuki India have their Indian plants plus equally strong international competition from China and from restructured North American and European operations.

The domestic automotive market of India attracts foreign companies, despite lower growth rates than those of China. Indian brands are making inroads into middle-income countries such as Turkey, though there have been false starts in entry to more sophisticated markets, with the supply of the Tata Indica model branded as the City Rover adding little to the failing Rover company in the UK. Tata's subsequent acquisition of the high-value brands of Land Rover and Jaguar is an alternative strategy for both domestic and export markets. A comparable strategy was evident in the IT sector in the 1980s and 1990s, when some Indian software companies sought European partners to co-brand with for entry into the North American market.

Brown *et al.* (2003) describe the extension of automotive brands into retro areas with Volkswagen's "new beetle", but India's automotive industry has maintained brands such as the Hindustan Ambassador and the Royal Enfield motorcycle that have achieved retro heritage status. The Royal Enfield factory is one of Chennai's tourist destinations (see http://www.royalenfields.com/). The potential value of heritage brands is demonstrated by the Harley-Davidson company's application for permission to establish retail outlets in the country, to be followed by local assembly to avoid luxury import taxes. However, the associations of such traditional designs is not entirely positive, and has masked the progress and transformation of Indian manufacturing capacity from outsiders.

The development of the Tata Nano represents a more progressive and promising initiative with global implications. As an entry-level vehicle for the Indian market it has stimulated the development of small models within India by overseas manufacturers. Toyota Motor Corp., Ford Motor Co., General Motors Corp. and Volkswagen AG have plans to launch small cars in India during 2010.

The Nano has created a low-cost low-content paradigm which is impacting on design thinking beyond India (DeLoitte Touche Tohmatsu 2009) and foreign companies are establishing research and development (R&D) centers within India. Renault has established one in Mumbai for the development of local design and Daimler has a technical center in Pune. These initiatives add value to the presence of foreign firms and generate local intellectual capital (IC) and intellectual property (IP).

In the innovative area of electric vehicles, Reva, based in Bangalore, has stepped out of stereotype into a global niche and mainstream acceptance by leveraging a first-mover advantage from their domestic production experience to offer new models to a design standard acceptable in developed economies. With growing political support for electric vehicles in the USA, Reva is considering franchising the new NXR model for US production and sales, and has agreed to provide its drive-chain technology to General Motors (GM) for the electric version of the Chevrolet Spark, which is expected to go on sale in India by the end of 2011.

While no Indian company at the time of writing appears among the current global top-ten automotive manufactures, DeLoitte Touche Tohmatsu (2009) argue that there is every possibility that by 2020 there will be at least one.

While Chennai faces significant challenges to its emergence as the “Detroit of South Asia” (Automotive World, 2008) the presence of major component manufacturers with new and expanded component plants from GKN and Delphi India, and the level of indigenous capability demonstrated by Deming awards, suggests that this sector will continue to be a major asset.

The limiting factor for all competing Indian automotive centers is likely to be in the availability of a sufficiently highly skilled workforce (DeLoitte Touche Tohmatsu 2009). This places the ability to attract and retain a skilled workforce at the center of policy, and reinforces the importance of the balance between functionality and representationality in place brand management.

## Service Tourism

As noted at the start of this chapter, tourism offers a key means of raising the profile of urban locations and of developing the identity of these locations for residents and visitors alike. Both place branding and the resources developed for tourism can support the attraction of inward investment, joint ventures, and local and global brand development.

Tourism infrastructure can support developments in other economic sectors directly, as with medical tourism, which draws on India's cultural heritage to attract foreign patients (Halemane and Mandemaker 2007). While this presents a specific challenge to the Indian and Chinese health services, it offers an extension of the successful service innovation of the IT sector, drawing on a large pool of highly trained doctors and low treatment costs (*The Economist* 2004).

India has also developed a significant global presence in pharmaceuticals and maintained this under WTO conditions (Kale and Little 2009). The key centers and innovative biotechnology clusters are some distance from Chennai, in Pune and Hyderabad in particular. However, Indian life-science companies such as Wockhardt are providing healthcare packages combining medical procedures with recuperation in cultural or environmental surroundings. The continuing economic development of India is leading to the emergence of life-style disease more common in the developed world alongside health conditions associated with poverty and underdevelopment. Major employers are responding with fitness and health awareness campaigns for their workforces (*India Today* 2009). The development of medical tourism is one way to cross-subsidize these challenging demands on national health care provision. The leading eye hospital in Chennai already cross-subsidizes its support of more remote rural communities through internet diagnosis with the income from patients who can afford to pay for their care, a model used elsewhere in India (Healthcare Management Express 2002).

## Kollywood and the Tamil Diaspora

Movies have been produced in Chennai since 1916, and at the end of the 1930s, the legislature of the State of Madras passed the Entertainment Tax Act 1939. Chennai had become a hub for the movie-making industries in other languages, including Sri Lankan cinema and Sri Lankan Tamil cinema (Abram *et al.* 2003). However, the Chennai movie industry differed from its counterpart in Mumbai in the influence of politics on Tamil movies – chief ministers and opposition leaders have been directors, actors and scriptwriters. The Tamil Nadu government has granted entertainment tax exemption for Tamil movies with pure Tamil titles.

The movie industry is of significance as a means of enlisting the Tamil diaspora in the cause of Chennai's and Tamil Nadu's development.

Two major relocations created this key audience. In the eighteenth century, indentured labor began to spread to other parts of the developing British empire, with associated migration, and, from the last quarter of the twentieth century, communal tensions and unrest in Sri Lanka led to a further dispersal, this time to many of the key centers of the global economy. The cultural industries can support both the functionality and representationality dimension of a place brand.

## TENSIONS OR SYNERGIES: POST-COLONIAL CITIES, MODERNIZATION AND HERITAGE

Mackenzie (2005) argues that the cultural mapping of the globe is a colonial/imperial framework. While cities are signifiers of modernity, the colonial view distinguishes between colonial India, the European cantonment and the "native town" (Mackenzie 2005, p. 36).

In the modern cities of India, the distinction is between formal and informal development. Recent representations in both cinema and literature have contrasted the informal slums (for example, *Slumdog Millionaire*) and the "darkness" of village India (for example, *White Tiger*) with the symbols of urban modernity. Arvind (2008) describes the presence of the informal construction workers' settlements even within the limits of Gurgaon, the modern center of growth south of Delhi.

In seeking cultural recovery, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has implemented a policy of replacing colonial names. However, the pre-colonial names chosen evoke only part of the complex history of human settlement on the subcontinent. In the case of Chennai, the name change from Madras arguably ran the risk of obscurity to the external viewer, making the task of international branding harder.

The need for infrastructure development flagged up at the beginning of this chapter is reflected in policies common to the major Indian cities. The maintenance and development of adequate infrastructure to support investment and development is essential to the functionality dimension of place brands.

Across India, electricity privatization has produced mixed results in terms of continuity of supply, but better results have been achieved in the improvement of transport and communications. Urban transit systems are becoming de rigueur for cities aspiring to global status, and Chennai had completed the first two phases of a heavy rail transit system by 2007.

Urban congestion and traffic pollution are widely recognized as problems by Indian city governments. The legislation requiring reduced emissions matches European standards. Though the effectiveness of this policy is jeopardized by the widespread practice of fuel adulteration, it ensures access to export markets for current Indian products. Telecommunications issues have largely been solved through cellular technology, with Indian companies such as Bharti Airtel producing business models that allow subscribers at village level access to the technology for modest monthly charges. Satellite television and the cell phone have replaced the traditional connection with the center through cinema. Coupled with the health outreach projects described earlier, the connection with the village hinterland is an essential aspect of brand building for Indian cities if they are to maintain credibility with the un-urbanized majority of the state populations.

## PLACE BRANDING AS CO-BRANDING

Olins (2002) demonstrates that the practice of national branding has a strong historical precedent, not least in the France, where national identity has been linked to a changing succession of monarchic and republican forms, while Urde *et al*. (2007) analyze monarchies as “heritage brands”.

While a country may act as the umbrella brand for its regions, the national stereotype becomes the brand by default. Place brands are complex “products” requiring a bottom-up approach and a community of support (Gnoth 2002), and in the case of India a federally governed subcontinent is an even more complex proposition.

Chennai enjoys potential synergies between its manufacturing capability and Bangalore’s IT competence, exemplified by the indigenous computerized engine management systems developed by the TVS Motor Company.

For the city to maximize its profile it needs to map brand elements both between levels and against the audiences at the city brand level. Tensions emerge between traditional images, cultural resources and global profile for external inward investment. Different demands are made by participants in return migration and the internal local and national labor markets.

Specific initiatives and developments at each of the three levels can address some or all of these audiences. In addition, particular economic sectors or activities will naturally draw on a different balance of these constituencies.

To monitor policy decisions effectively will require an approach similar to that used in assessing alternative futures in scenario planning (Schwartz 1991; Ringland 2002). The policy space between alternative choices can be mapped to see which audiences need to be engaged by different sectors and related initiatives.

## CHAPTER 10

# Case E: A Public–Private Partnership to Foster Science, Higher Education and Innovation – The Case of Switzerland with swissnex Boston

*Pascal Marmier & Marc Fetscherin*

### INTRODUCTION

Countries are engaged in a worldwide competition for the limited resources available. As Anholt (2002) states, "Globalization is turning the world into a gigantic supermarket" (p. 234). Countries compete with each other in such areas as exports and attracting the limited pool of tourism, foreign direct investment (FDI) and human talent. Science, higher education and innovation are key determinants of national competitiveness (Schwab 2009, p. 4). The agility with which a country adopts existing science and technology can enhance the productivity of its industries and firms. Specifically, access to and usage of information and communication technologies (ICTs) have critical spillover effects to other industries in a given nation. Providing an environment that fosters science and technology is crucial for a nation's competitiveness (Porter 1990). The same is true for higher education, where education increases the efficiency of workers. Education and training are crucial for economies that want to move up the value chain beyond simple production processes and products (Porter 1990). Innovation is also vital for a nation's competitiveness as it approaches the frontiers of knowledge. Firms from developing countries can improve their productivity by adopting existing ICT. However, firms from developed countries need to improve their productivity through innovation in a supportive business environment (Porter 1990; Schwab 2009).

Therefore, governments are turning to branding techniques to differentiate their countries on the global stage and establish a competitive edge

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(Sanches and Sekles 2008). As countries gain awareness of the importance of their brand, they adopt nation-branding projects and initiatives. A few have even passed laws to promote their brands and established special organizations charged with coordinating public–private partnerships. Switzerland, for example, has an organization, Presence Switzerland (*www.image-switzerland.ch*), that coordinates different entities with distinct objectives (for example, Osec Business Networks (export promotion), Swiss Business Hubs, swissnex network) and manages the country's communication strategy abroad (Pasquier 2008).

## WHAT IS swissnex?

### History

swissnex is a network of science and technology outposts run by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER) in cooperation with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). It currently handles five knowledge outposts: swissnex Boston (established in 2000), swissnex San Francisco (2003), swissnex Singapore (2004), swissnex Shanghai (2007) and swissnex Bangalore (2009). The swissnex network is a key component of the Swiss strategic policy on the promotion of science, higher education and innovation set by the Federal Council. Apart from Europe, priority countries for bilateral cooperation include the USA, India, China, Russia and South Africa given their proven potential for scientific and technological development.

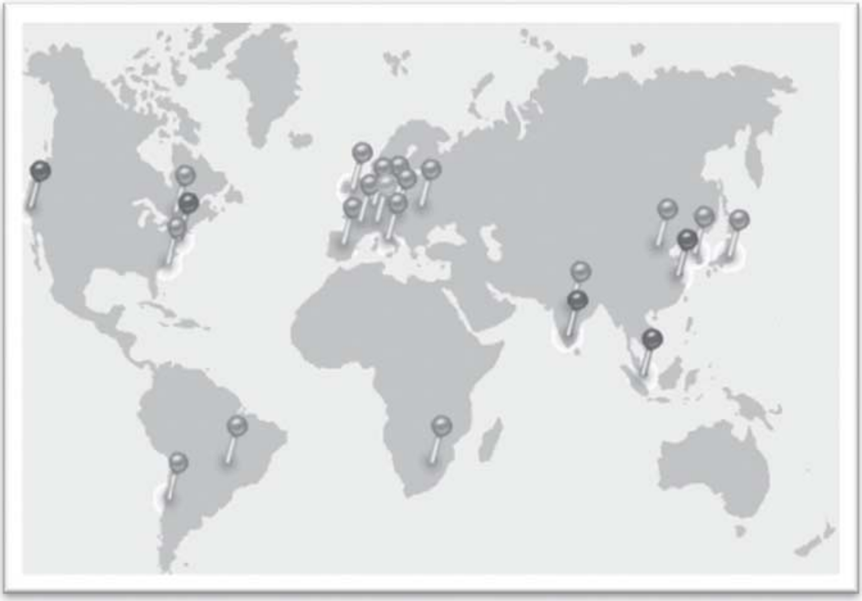
Running each location as a public–private partnership forms the core of the swissnex business model. Since 2003, the network has relied on both public and private funding (one-third from SER, two-thirds from other sources) for its activities. swissnex is now dedicated to expanding the group of sponsors and donors willing to support its services and ventures. Next to swissnex, SER maintains and develops a worldwide network of twenty-two science and technology counselors (STC) sharing the swissnex mission, twelve of them working at selected Swiss embassies. Figure 10.1 illustrates the locations of the swissnex network outposts and STCs.

### The swissnex Mission

The swissnex mission, reflected in its slogan "connecting the dots" in science and technology, has seven components:

1. To strengthen Switzerland's reputation as a center for science, technology and innovation.

**FIGURE 10.1 | Locations of swissnex and science counselors**



*Note*: ● = headquarters; ● = swissnex locations;[1] ● = science counselor locations.[2]
*Source*: Reprinted with the kind permission of swissnex.org.

2. To set up and maintain a dense network of contacts with universities, research institutions, companies and other organizations in the host regions and in Switzerland, as well as to support Swiss scientists in the host regions.
3. To structure, strengthen and promote the interests of Switzerland and the presence of Swiss research, technology and know-how in the host regions.
4. To support the internationalization efforts of Swiss institutions in the host regions.
5. To coordinate the network of partner institutions and researchers with the aim of developing a tradition of scientific and technological knowledge exchange.
6. To strengthen brand-building and public relations in the host regions, as well as media coverage in Switzerland.
7. To help structure, implement and extend bilateral research cooperation programs where such programs exist.

### Branding swissnex

In 2006, SER introduced a corporate ID for the growing number of platforms, including Swiss House for Advanced Research and Education (SHARE) in Boston and Swiss House in Singapore. A joint brand name, logo and appearance were created to reinforce the idea of a network (see logo at right – swissnex.org, reprinted with permission). Implemented in 2007, these changes enabled swissnex to have both a consistent brand image and a brand identity. The slogan "connecting the dots" is also used by each outpost for its promotion. Other aims of the rebranding of SHARE to swissnex were to increase brand awareness, brand recognition and, ultimately, brand recall. swissnex Boston is now part of Switzerland's knowledge network, with other science and technology outposts in San Francisco, Singapore, Shanghai and Bangalore.

## swissnex BOSTON

swissnex Boston is structured as a traditional consulate but with a focus on developing collaborations between Switzerland and the greater Boston region in science, higher education and innovation. It also follows a public–private partnership business model.

### History

swissnex Boston was initially established under the name Swiss House for Advanced Research and Education (SHARE). SHARE's goals were to develop a strategy to reverse the Swiss "brain drain", to raise local awareness of Swiss R&D projects, and to provide an environment conducive to networking between Switzerland and the Boston region. Over the years, these goals and their resulting activities were expanded to include collaborative ventures with other stakeholders, such as organizations promoting research and innovation, and universities, as well as events in other regions such as Eastern Canada.

### Organizational Structure

swissnex Boston connects the best of many worlds by bridging knowledge, energy and expertise in science, higher education and innovation between

Switzerland and the Boston region. Vital financial support comes from partners and sponsors sharing the commitment to “connecting the dots”. As a public–private organization, swissnex Boston has numerous stakeholders and partners. Stakeholders define the scope of activities, while partners contribute to and benefit from what swissnex Boston does.

### *Stakeholders*

Given that swissnex Boston serves as a collaboration platform, it has a wide range of stakeholders. For example, as a public organization, swissnex needs to maintain good relationships and visibility within some of the networks around the government, such as the media, politicians and lobbying groups. In addition, the organization needs to be in line with the needs and strategies of companies that have a strong R&D focus, such as pharmaceutical and high-tech manufacturers. swissnex is therefore part of a complex system of relationships among many organizations in science, technology and higher education, and it must operate carefully at the junction of various disciplines and modes of thinking and fields of endeavor.

swissnex Network. swissnex Boston works closely with its “sister” organization in the USA, swissnex San Francisco, maintaining close contact and sharing common projects.

Embassy and consulates. swissnex Boston interacts with the science counselor at the embassy and other consulates across the USA, providing ideas and contacts to reinforce projects across the country. It serves as a venue for events and programs for Swiss guests visiting the USA.

Presence Switzerland. The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, which manages Switzerland’s image abroad, implements the Confederation’s global communication and imaging strategy. This strengthens and coordinates the presence of Switzerland abroad, conveying an authentic and vibrant image. Presence Switzerland’s main goals are to establish a network of contacts for future decision-makers, increase knowledge about Switzerland, and enhance the country’s position as a thriving economic place.

Osec Swiss Business Hub USA. This is the Trade Commission of Switzerland to the USA, a “one-stop shop” business solutions agency for small and medium-sized companies that matches Swiss talent, innovation and quality with American marketing. Swiss Business Hub USA has seven offices around the country (Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New

York, San Francisco and Washington, DC) staffed with a team of trade professionals. It offers in-depth knowledge of the American market as well as a global network of trade professionals through Osec Business Network Switzerland. Companies can use these resources to make informed decisions and minimize business risk in the American marketplace. Several events every year are organized by swissnex Boston in partnership with the Swiss Business Hub, such as breakfast discussions with business experts on "Transatlantic Ventures".

### *Partners*

Partners including universities and other communities, are essential to swissnex Boston's existence, since they provide the content and financial resources needed for projects.

Universities and the science community. Universities such as the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH in Zurich and EPFL in Lausanne) and the University of Zurich have signed collaborative agreements with swissnex Boston to represent them and to work on specific requests such as alumni management, promotion of postgraduate studies, branding and media relations. For organizations such as the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET) or the Innovation Promotion Agency, swissne*x* Boston has developed a customized strategy to support their members (startups, young talent and universities of applied sciences).

Other communities (social and business). A number of companies, associations and individuals collaborate with swissnex Boston on projects such as a workshops, study tours and presentations.

## Leadership, Funding and Performance

Support from SER, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and private donors, along with strong leadership, have all contributed to the success of swissnex Boston. In 1999, Lombard Odier Darier Hentsch, a Geneva-based private bank, made a donation to the Swiss government to purchase the current swissnex building in Cambridge, Mass. Since its inception, this truly public–private partnership has become a role model in countries around the world. In its ten years of operation, more than fifty sponsors, donors and partners have put their trust in swissnex and contributed close to

TABLE 10.1 swissnex resources and impact

| | Resources (input) | | | Impact (outcome) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | FTE (plus interns) | Budget (millions CHF) | Third-party contribution (%) | Number of public events* | Guests at swissnex events | Annual report (pages) |
| **2000** | 2 | n/a | n/a | 25 | n/a | n/a |
| **2001** | 3 | n/a | n/a | 35 | n/a | n/a |
| **2002** | 6 | 1.25 | 37 | 50 | 3,000 | 12 |
| **2003** | 6 | 1.10 | 41 | 60 | 4,500 | 21 |
| **2004** | 7 | 1.74 | 37 | 50 | 5,000 | 25 |
| **2005** | 7 | 1.81 | 37 | 60 | 5,600 | 25 |
| **2006** | 8 | 1.89 | 45 | 60 | 6,200 | 32 |
| **2007** | 8 | 2.45 | 57 | 70 | 7,000 | 30 |
| **2008** | 8 | 2.41 | 57 | 60 | 7,000 | 42 |

*Note*: * Presentations, video-conferences, panel discussions, networking events, seminars, workshops and visits of high-level delegations.
*Source*: swissnex annual reports.

CHF 5 million, with CHF 800,000 of that in 2009 alone. The Swiss government provides approximately the same amount. Dr Xavier Comtesse, swissnex's director for its first two years, laid the groundwork for success with strong leadership, which has been continued by Christoph von Arb (from 2002 to 2007), and since 2008 by Pascal Marmier.

Table 10.1 summarizes the full-time equivalent (FTE) staff and public–private budget needed to run swissnex Boston and quantifies the impact of swissnex Boston's public events, projects and total overall exposure.

These public events covered a variety of current topics. swissnex Boston hosted scientific presentations on functional genomics and seminars on science policy matters – for example, global branding mechanisms for academic institutions. There were community and cultural functions, too, such as rendering the Charles River fit for swimming again, art and science exhibits (including three at Boston's Logan Airport) and film screenings. Yet the one thing these very different events had in common was a Swiss component. In some cases, it was a speaker, or a company, a topic, or view that had a distinctly Swiss flavor, thus bringing the rich, diverse and creative features of Switzerland to the fore. As a result in part to events like these, swissnex Boston maintains a strong presence in the media. Dozens of articles have appeared in daily newspapers, magazines and on television.

## Activities and Initiatives

### *Activities*

Among the many activities organized by swissnex Boston have been a Nanotech workshop, a career development seminar for Swiss postdoctoral candidates, and a workshop on alternative energy and sustainability with scientists and business executives, organized jointly by Harvard University and the Paul Scherrer Institute. swissnex Boston also helped local universities to obtain grants from the Swiss National Science Foundation and invited senior political figures, ministers and leading researchers to speak at their campuses.

In 2004, a Swiss minister visited Boston for the first time. The first keynote speech by a Swiss Nobel Prize Laureate was given in Boston during that same year, and the first television program about swissnex Boston (at that time operating as SHARE) was aired on a European TV channel. More recently, a three-month exhibit at Logan Airport showcasing twenty-five world-class scientists active at Swiss universities was seen by several thousand visitors. With about eighty events in 2009 alone, swissnex Boston's work has covered numerous fields, including:

- Science, education and academia: demos and networking with the Zurich School of Applied Sciences, and a round-table discussion on sustainability management with students and researchers.
- Innovation: a two-day workshop with academic partners and companies on "Innovation Partnerships" and a "Transatlantic Venturing" panel, utilizing examples of Euro–US companies.
- Culture, society and the Cambridge neighborhood: launch of the Swiss Harvard initiative and family activities around swimming.

Some of the events are planned at the request of Swiss partners (universities or companies), while others aim to create a sense of community among those interested in swissnex. swissnex Boston looks at each event as an opportunity to make an impression and create a "special moment" for its guests, whether by finding the perfect business partner or simply by enjoying the atmosphere. After each event, guests receive a follow-up note inviting them to continue the discussion and to join swissnex Boston's growing mailing list.

### *Initiatives: recurrent projects*

With dozens of events annually, swissnex Boston has had a significant impact on the community. But since success is measured not only by the number of repeat guests but also by the projects that arise from any given event, a short list of these ongoing initiatives follows:

- *Climate Trail.* Initiated during the first Cambridge Science Festival, this project combines educational panels on climate change with materials and guidelines for experts to present. From its start in Boston, the climate trail has traveled throughout the USA and is now packaged by Presence Suisse as a kit to any Swiss representation abroad.
- *Venture Leaders.* This two-week "boot camp" for entrepreneurs from Swiss universities was developed with the assistance of various partners for the first nine presentations. Alongside the educational and business development gains for the participant, it is also an opportunity to brand Switzerland as innovative through various events around the visit of the Swiss entrepreneurs: a "Swiss National Startup Team".
- *World Economic Forum (WEF) Debrief.* This panel, comprising participants to the WEF, has become a landmark event for swissnex Boston, attracting a respected cross-section of Boston's "brains". swissnex San Francisco has replicated this event.
- *SwissLink Boston and Swiss American Chamber of Commerce.* These two groups started as spin-offs of two communities that swissnex Boston had spent years courting: executives, and young scientists and professionals. Both organizations now have their own memberships and programs but continue to collaborate closely with swissnex Boston.

## Main Challenges

Since its creation in 2000, swissnex Boston has faced several challenges.

Credibility. swissnex Boston needed to gain the attention, confidence and respect of the main players in science and technology in the Boston region. Collaborative activities were already under way between Switzerland and the Boston area before swissnex was established, especially within academic circles, so the demand for a new partnership was not apparent. The organization had to define a compelling niche and value proposition to persuade its partners while at the same time find the best way to work with dissimilar groups – academics, businesses and society. The new entity had to establish productive relationships with institutes such as the Swiss CTI (innovation promotion agency). Consequently, as with many other startups, swissnex Boston continually revised its business plan and business model.

Measuring success. A central question from the start was how success should be measured. Is it possible to put a dollar figure on a successful program training entrepreneurs? Would measuring third-party contributions be a good proxy for deciding future strategies? Working closely with headquarters and other swissnex offices, swissnex Boston has instituted metrics that reliably track the output and impact of what it does.

Build a "hybrid" organization. The public–private partnership model presented numerous hurdles. From running human resource and finance functions to building the right level of expertise within the team, swissnex Boston founders realized there was no blueprint for such a unique organization. How does an organization balance complying with the administrative rules of a public organization while allowing the flexibility of a private organization to develop projects and events for some of the world's most innovative minds? Communication was the key – personal interaction among participants, visitors and partners. In fact, swissnex Boston prefers to use the term "guests" rather than participants. Internally, significant time was spent finding people who were able to function in an environment requiring both rigorous project management skills and interpersonal communication flair.

Building a transatlantic community. Given its focus on two locations, swissnex Boston has learned to establish and manage productive relationships across a spectrum of regions and disciplines. Despite the ubiquity of technologies allowing swissnex to connect people, the organization realized that there was no substitute for face-to-face and group gatherings to create a sense of community. Without an official hub in Switzerland, swissnex Boston has relied on its partners to spread the word and promote its services back home.

Marketing and branding. Finally there are marketing and branding challenges. How much "Swissness" is enough? For every event, the organization has to decide which brand (and brand attributes) to put forward. Is it Switzerland the country, Switzerland as a tourist destination, Swiss firms, products or services? Swiss people and workers, the Swiss consulate or swissnex Boston, or a combination of these? Do the swissnex location and atmosphere adequately convey the objectives put forward for any given event? Since these events typically involve other organizations (such as ThinkSwiss, a US-wide program to promote Swiss science and innovation), swissnex Boston has to find ways to include other Swiss partners in the branding and marketing. In most cases, the events are co-branded.

Therefore, a fine balance between swissnex branding and co-branding must be struck.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Ten years and nearly 500 events later, swissnex Boston is no doubt a success story. Yet it remains, and must remain, a work in progress. As the organization ponders the topics of the future in a dynamic environment, swissnex Boston must reinvent itself continuously.

### Engaging the Community

From the start, swissnex Boston has operated as an “open-source” model. Technology is evolving too fast for any individual to stay current, so the organization relies on its partners and contacts to frame the issues on which swissnex Boston should work, and to understand better the critical topics in expert circles. swissnex Boston thrives on listening to its guests and learning from the community what would be of interest, exploring new partners, and the best formats for particular events. Events have also been designed as two-way conversations. Avoiding the one-sided promotional pitch has allowed swissnex Boston to attract high-level participants and to distinguish itself from other foreign representatives in the area.

### Bridging Different Communities

What participants appreciate is the mix and quality of people as speakers or guests. While initially it was not part of the strategy, over time swissnex Boston attained a reputation for being “bridge builders”. The global quality of its activities already provide an element of openness, but the choice of topics and the way the events target participants of well-defined groups (academic, business, government) to share their perspectives are key success factors.

### Organizational Strategies

Bringing together two entirely different systems – an official public government representation and a collaborative private platform – has proved an exemplary strategy. The organization has learned to design processes, hire employees and deliver projects by integrating the corporate cultures and main characteristics of the two systems. There is always a tension between these extremities, but it is one that has helped to push the boundaries of the model. Indeed, certain arms of the Swiss government are now looking to swissnex Boston as a source of ideas, and other countries are learning from the swissnex experience, too. What has proved most beneficial is the ability to think and act fast. At swissnex, the timing from idea to execution is short and straightforward, allowing a large number of projects to be implemented successfully.

### Location and Environment

The location of swissnex Boston in the middle of Cambridge, Mass., close to leading universities and businesses, has been a winning point. Perfectly adapted to a region where the population density is high, swissnex Boston offers a central meeting point for its guests. The building itself has delivered on its promise to facilitate high-level and productive discussions. The open floor plan allows for all kinds of one-on-one and group interactions. Participants describe the atmosphere – the combination of Swiss service with innovative activities – as one of the main reasons why they like swissnex Boston.

### Serendipity

Serendipity is key for swissnex Boston. The team never knows who will come through the door, what ideas will emerge from an event, and which project might shift in a totally different direction. The focus on networking accentuates that serendipitous aspect of the work. However, the key is to identify opportunities and act quickly when they emerge.

## CONCLUSION

The swissnex model is an early attempt at capitalizing on a specific niche in nation branding by fostering science, higher education and innovation. While nations have a long tradition of science diplomacy, the swissnex model offers an “open source” approach to establishing connections between a specific country and the regions where it maintains knowledge outposts. As the swissnex network continues to grow, it is clear that each location will have its own activities, branding, connections, culture and flair, but most will have common characteristics such as those described above.

The main reason for swissnex’s success thus far is that stakeholders rapidly understood its value and offered the necessary financial resources.

Not only does stakeholders' engagement help to build new activities, but it also signals the value of what is being produced at swissnex outposts around the world. Finally, as swissnex's work has to do with the creation of knowledge, success must be evaluated in a broad, unconventional way.

Headquarters for the swissnex network refuses to make a formal assessment of its measurement system. Innovation is so multifaceted that numbers are insufficient and they cannot measure a causal relationship to illustrate success. Indeed, the emerging "innovation economy" created by the collaborative output of academia and industry is fueled by intangibles. The value of the conversations that swissnex Boston triggers – conversations that lead to enduring relationships and knowledge transfer, and ultimately to the building of a transatlantic community – cannot be measured in the short term. As with any branding initiatives, the intensity of effort needs to be constant, but the results take years to materialize. After all, innovation is about change, and the leadership behind swissnex has made the strategic decision to be flexible and opportunistic.

## NOTES

More information can be found by contacting swissnex Boston, 420 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA t: (617) 876-3076 f: (617) 876-3079; www.swissnexboston.org.

1. swissnex locations: Bangalore, Boston, San Francisco, Singapore, Shanghai.
2. Science counselor locations: Beijing, Berlin, Brasilia, Brussels, New Delhi, London, Madrid, Moscow, Ottawa, Paris, Pretoria, Rome, Santiago, Seoul, Tokyo, Vienna, Washington, DC.

# PART 3

# The Future Evolution of Place Branding

## CHAPTER 11

# Social Media and Immersive Worlds: Why International Place Branding Doesn't Get Weekends Off

*Joshua S. Fouts*

On 29 December 2008, as tensions heated up around renewed conflict in the Gaza Strip between Israel and Palestinian militants, the Israeli Consulate of New York City made an unusual announcement. They would be taking questions about the conflict the next day via Twitter – the purported first-ever Twitter press conference (Cohen 2009). Twitter is an asynchronous messaging tool in which users post notes using a maximum of 140 characters. People can "follow" other Twitter users by visiting their Twitter page. Most Twitter pages are publicly viewable on the internet, thus making them available to millions.

The idea for the Twitter press conference was the brainchild of David Saranga, Israel's Consul for Media and Public Affairs in New York City. Saranga was no stranger to innovative approaches to branding and outreach. He had previously made headlines as the person behind the so-called "Beer 'n' Babes" campaign of 2007, in which US "men's lifestyle" magazine *Maxim* was invited to Israel to do a photo shoot of women members of the Israeli Defense Forces. Some women members of the Knesset were not amused by the stunt, but Saranga, in a March 2007 interview with the *Jerusalem Post* about the "Beer 'n' Babes" campaign offered that the biggest problem "Israel has is with males from the age of 18–35 . . . Israel does not seem relevant for them, and that is bad for branding . . . In order to change their perception of Israel as only a land of conflict, we want to present to them an Israel that interests them" (Nisan 2007).

In conversations with place branding experts over the years about the value of social media and immersive virtual environments for international place branding, the overwhelming response seems to be that experts are really not sure, and that the spaces seem too new to have a definable impact.

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Over the past 15 years that I have been studying the role of emergent media, social media on cultural relations, public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, and for the past seven years examining the added element of virtual worlds in this context, I have come away convinced that countries need to pay significantly more attention to their identity and brand as it is manifested across multiple evolving internet-based platforms.

## GAZA AND THE ESCALATION OF VIRTUAL PROTESTS

The 30 December 2008 Twitter press conference came on the heels of a cross-section of social media and virtual-world-based protests against Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip. In the course of conducting research for our project "Digital Diplomacy: Understanding Islam through Virtual Worlds", my collaborator Rita J. King and I had uncovered a number of virtual-world efforts to this end.

Though the Gaza conflict heated up in December 2008, missile attacks had been going on throughout the year, which resulted in several online initiatives, such as that by Mohammed Yahia, a science editor at the Cairo-based website, IslamOnline.net (King 2008). Mr Yahia is one of the creators of the "virtual hajj to Mecca", a 3D, immersive construction of Mecca for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, to experience a simulated version of the Mecca pilgrimage.

The virtual hajj to Mecca was built in Second Life, a 3D immersive "virtual world" accessible to internet-connected computers, where users from around the world interact in real time and create their own content. Second Life has a diverse international membership – less than 35 percent of its roughly 18 million registered users are from the USA. Second Life statistics indicate an average of more than 10,000 new users registering each day. Real people are represented by 3D versions of themselves called "avatars". The avatars take new or different names, as with the screen names people use in instant messages. More importantly, perhaps, they build vivid immersive environments capable of dramatically replicating physical world elements (Linden Lab 2009).

When Rita King and I interviewed Mohammed Yahia in March 2008, he had just completed the construction of a new virtual museum dedicated to memorializing Palestinians who were victims of the Gaza conflict. The museum was filled with explicit photographs of wounded men, women and children. According to Mr Yahia, whom we interviewed at the museum in the form of his Second Life avatar "Breathe Swindlehurst", the goal of the museum was to protest the death of any innocent victims. "We understand

Israel was targeting militants", Mohammed told us, "but the accidental killing was just too high."

By December 2008, internet-based protests against Israel's policy in Gaza had spread virally to YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. On 29 December 2008 a virtual world protest was held in Second Life, organized by Mohammed Yahia and colleagues. The stated goal was to facilitate open conversations around the conflict and to prevent children from being injured. Against a backdrop of virtual world protests, and viral YouTube and Facebook campaigns, Israel responded.

## A TWITTER PRESS CONFERENCE; A YOUTUBE CAMPAIGN

Israel's 30 December 2008 Twitter press conference seemed to be an overwhelming success, both in terms of media attention (the press conference was covered by numerous national and international news outlets) and dialogue. More than sixty questions were answered during an asynchronous 140-character press conference that required followers to reload the New York consulate's Twitter web page in order to view updates. Questions that weren't answered during the hour were addressed on the consulate's blog. Zucker-Scharff (2009) reported on the Twitter press conference with this quote from one of the attendees: "Say what you will about @israelconsulate twitter event", one participant tweeted, "I doubt my question on Egypt would have been answered otherwise. Thanks #askisrael."

Israel didn't stop with Twitter. The Twitter press conference heralded a coordinated series of responses by Israel across internet platforms. Shortly after the Twitter press conference, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opened a Twitter account and began sending out video links to YouTube of him visiting villages in Israel that had been hit by attacks from Gaza militants. The Israeli Defense Forces Spokesperson's Unit also opened up a YouTube page, which has subsequently uploaded nearly sixty videos with hundreds of thousands of views and titles such as "Three Terrorists Shooting Rockets 25 September 2009" and "Hamas Booby Trapped School and Zoo 11 Jan. 2009". They also created Facebook and MySpace accounts. And, finally, discussions were held in support of Israel in the virtual world of Second Life. Au (2009) reported that in "SL Israel", an island in Second Life "which recreates – in virtual form – aspects of the country, from religious landmarks of Jerusalem such as the Temple Mount, to tourist sites of Tel Aviv" protestors began to flood the space. The owner of the island ensured that it was used as an opportunity for dialogue and discourse. In an interview with people on the island, one person implored Au to tell readers: "Please write that I'm an American Jew" speaking on the island with "a Canadian Muslim, and we are having a great time sharing our commonalities. I'm serious."

## Know Your Culture: Context is Key

Israel clearly understood the potential brand impact of virtual worlds and social media, as demonstrated by their quick and comprehensive response to grassroots movements criticizing Israeli policy. The USA has also explored the use of Twitter for branding, and now has active Twitter feeds coming out of embassies throughout the world. The use varies from good to dubious.

One example that needs more work is the Twitter effort by the US Ambassador to Kenya. On 1 September 2009 the new US ambassador to Kenya, Michael E. Ranneberger, a career foreign service officer with extensive experience on the African continent, started a Twitter feed. Between the launch of the Twitter feed and the end of the month, he posted approximately seven tweets. These micro dispatches were lauded as an example of "Twitter Diplomacy" by journalist Shashank Bengali, who blogs for McClatchey media on his "Somewhere in Africa". When he broke the story on 22 September 2009, Bengali declared that the ambassador had come out "swinging" with tough comments about Kenyan presidential appointees and support of opposition votes.

Even though it might be a good idea that the likes of Ambassador Ranneberger and others are exploring these tools for branding and outreach, the question is whether they are using them in a relevant context? And, more importantly, are they reaching their intended audiences? In our conversations with US public diplomacy Foreign Service officers in 2009, a trend appeared: diplomats feel pressured to use social media tools, often seemingly for the sake of just using them. They seem to be getting frustrated, feeling that they are being told to use the technology without any appreciation for how the tools will be used on the ground in the country in which they are serving. In other words, they are being asked to use the tools without context. However, context is critical in place branding.

In the case of Ambassador Ranneberger, as of 29 September 2009 the number of people following him on Twitter (that is, people who have configured their Twitter page to view the ambassador's short missives) was over 300. In contrast, he was following no one, which is worrying, considering that Twitter's potential as a branding tool is maximized when it is treated as a conversation.

On 23 September 2009, Judith McHale, President Obama's new Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, impressed this point on an audience at Harvard University's new Public Diplomacy Collaborative: "We have to engage, even when we disagree with others. We have to communicate – two-way communication, not one-way messaging – through both government-to-people dialogue and people-to-people dialogue."

In Twitter, the best way to demonstrate intentionality in dialogue is by following the people with whom you are trying to create discourse. Sure, the ambassador (or his staff if he is indeed writing the tweets) can follow replies in the Twitter stream. But savvy audiences know better. If you are not following someone on Twitter it means their information is not a central or important piece of information to you. For people in the diplomatic corps who are ostensibly specialists in cultural nuance, the message one sends by not following someone on Twitter can be as significant, and culturally insensitive, as showing the soles of your shoes to an Arab official.

By building a relationship with your audience and making them feel a part of the conversation you can use Twitter toward one of its key strengths: damage control. In a 30 September 2009 interview on "Metanomics", a virtual-worlds culture and economy program broadcast from the virtual world of Second Life, Chris Abraham, president and chief operating officer of Abraham Harrison, a public relations and marketing firm, described Twitter as a tool that "allows for fast response, important for brands experiencing a crisis, or to defuse tensions".

## Poor Media Narrative or Good Business Acumen?

Unfortunately, the media narrative around tools such as Twitter veers between breathless reporting about the astonishing amounts of money being invested in Twitter to derisiveness. In Twitter's case, the business has yet to make or demonstrate a profit, which has emboldened the media to dismiss it. The failure with this logic, however, is that brands are not exclusively affected by profitable business ventures. In fact, the power of grassroots internet movements and their impact on brands are as likely to come from a volunteer movement as from a for-profit one.

But entrepreneurs with an eye toward the potential monetizing power of Twitter have appeared in dramatic ways. The first of these showed up when Twitter announced that it would be "suggesting" to new users the people to follow. With literally millions of potential viewers, this was seen as a potential boon for advertisers and marketers. Jason McCabe Calacanis, a serial internet entrepreneur who has been growing and selling successful internet media businesses since the start of the 2000s, announced that he would pay Twitter $250,000 if they would lock a slot in for him for two years on the "suggested follow" (Calacanis 2009). Mr Calacanis's move should be a clarion call to countries as it illustrates the importance of this tool for affecting brands.

## When Brands Don’t Care: Twitter and Iran

Not all countries care about brand impact. During the 2009 presidential elections in Iran a movement spread across the Twitter community to help protect Iranian citizens who were reportedly using Twitter to inform the world about government violence. Twitter provides minimal user information on each person’s Twitter page: name, location, website and bio. There was concern that the Iranian government would attempt to block accounts that listed themselves as being in Tehran. A call went out across the US Twitter community to change their Twitter location name to “Tehran”. Tens of thousands of Twitter users around the world changed their location name to “Tehran, Iran”. In fact, people even created Twitter accounts expressly for the purpose of listing their location as Iran. There was even a notable moment when a US State Department official, Jared Cohen, contacted the heads of Twitter to ask them to delay their regularly scheduled server restart so that users in Iran could continue posting messages.

Intuitively one can deduce that the way the Iranian government handled the aftermath of the elections had a negative impact on their brand. The efforts of Twitter users who so passionately changed their location profile to Tehran is just one example. But these actions did not deter Iran from violent police crackdowns on protestors. However, it did demonstrate the potential of this tool to mobilize people and impact a brand. For a country that cares about their brand, this is a powerful example.

## Overcoming Biases: The Choice Is Not a Binary One, Mixed Media is Mixed Reality

For the social media, virtual world and physical world interactions are not mutually exclusive. They are part of a broader tapestry of interactions that a country should employ to manage its brand. Choosing virtual does not mean excluding the physical.

Technology and social media tools are evolving at a pace that often far exceeds the agility or comfort level of standard government pace and practice. Often the biggest problem in responsiveness to incorporating these tools is within the bureaucracy itself. Reactions to our writings and talks about the potential of emergent media, social media and virtual worlds for country branding and cultural relations appear in a few predictable forms. I have outlined these below, in the hope that they can be used better to inform organizations and help them to overcome biases against the potential of these new tools.

- The “cartoonish” appearance. People are taken aback by what they see as the cartoonish look of avatars. However, this resistance disappears as soon as one gets an avatar of one’s own. As Sandy Kearney, former director of IBM’s virtual worlds business unit, once told me, “People worry about being dressed appropriately for a business meeting in virtual environments. If you think a virtual me doesn’t matter, let me take a shot at making an avatar for you. The first thing you’ll do once you see it is want to change it.”
- It isn’t “real”. Because it is “digital” people criticize the experience as not being real. King (2009) addressed this issue by comparing the “realness” of the work of Picasso’s 1957 interpretations of Diego Velasquez’s painting “Las Meninas”: “[E]ven the original canvases by Picasso aren’t ‘real’. After all, Picasso was merely interpreting a work by Velasquez. Come to think of it, even Las Meninas isn’t ‘real’, except in the broadest definition of the term (having a verifiable existence) which also applies to works in Second Life. The argument that no facsimile can ever be as rich as the original undermines the sheer force of creative power that fuels human progress in the form of artistic expression.”
- Virtual Worlds and Social Media are “anonymous”. It is true that people can choose to be anonymous in Second Life, just as a person can choose to falsify their identity in e-mails, Facebook or Twitter. The first step toward reducing anonymity is to ensure that you yourself are engaging people in a transparent way. By treating collaborative media as a broadcast tool, such as US Ambassador Ranneberger did in the example discussed above, you set a tone that is not collaborative, not transparent and a disincentive for your audience to be open.
- Fear of technology. Many people want to be current with technology but feel that it is evolving too rapidly for them to keep up. New technologies have always had detractors, who dismiss them as being disruptive or unethical. As New York University Professor Ted Magder noted in 2009 at the Aspen Institute Cultural Diplomacy Forum, even Samuel Morse, who revolutionized communications with the invention of the telegraph, had detractors. In the 1850s, people began to refer to Morse’s telegraph system as the “tel-lie-graph”.

We are at a turning point in our civilization: The evolution of a new global culture and economy is being written across an evolving communication tapestry. The information order is no longer top-down and hierarchical, as it once was. It is now bottom-up, distributed and dynamic. Today's country brands are just as likely to be affected by headlines in a major paper as they are in a protest on an island in Second Life or a sea of a million Twitter users changing their accounts to protect the identity of a few. For countries to have a true impact on their brand they must be willing to engage cultures and communities where they are, not where they think they should be.

## CHAPTER 12

# The E-branding of Places

*Robert Govers & Frank M. Go*

In our book *Place Branding* (2009), we argue that successful place branding requires the bridging of three gaps. First, the strategy gap – that is, the projected place image (sponsored and mediated marketing communications) and product offering that need to be aligned with the place identity. If they are not, the place brand is at risk of being contrived as spin and marketing gibberish. Second, a place brand satisfaction gap, building realistic market expectations – promises that can be delivered. This is being complicated by the fact that perceived images are significantly impacted by media reporting, word of mouth and mouse (Web 2.0), as well as the cultural, social and individual background of the receiver. Third, the place brand performance gap, which requires the promised place experience to be delivered – in this sense, actions speak louder than words.

In order to bridge these three gaps we constructed a place brand building guide, consisting of three times three phases (see Figure 12.1). This chapter revisits this model and illustrates through existing examples how the internet can play an important role in the execution of this practical action plan. It raises a few central questions as the forces of information technologies and globalization result in the deconstruction of distributed images (in the minds of consumers and social media networks around the world). How, under conditions of contextual noise, can selected attributes (landscape, climate, heritage, popular culture, arts, food production, design, architecture, events, traditions and so on) be identified that contribute to the essence of place brands? How is this linked to technology-mediated interactions between stakeholders in the value chain, in a manner that leverages the impact of e-marketing and in turn helps to bridge the gaps of identity, image and experience? Simultaneously, how does it match the expectations of selected visitor profiles during the experience delivery and communication stage in an e-place brand-differential competitive manner?

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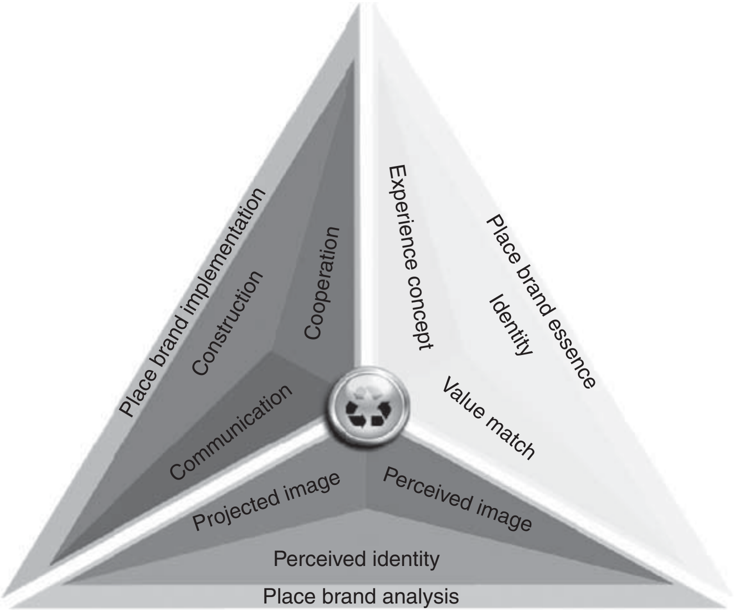
**FIGURE 12.1 | $3^2$-gap-bridging place branding guide**


Place brand implementation
Construction
Cooperation
Communication
Experience concept
Place brand essence
Identity
Value match
Projected image
Perceived image
Perceived identity
Place brand analysis

*Source*: Govers and Go (2009).

## PLACE BRAND ANALYSIS

As with any compelling and effective strategic choices, it is crucial to underpin decision-making via thorough analysis. In place branding this is no different. It requires comprehensive insight into three major perspectives. In essence, place branding is about building reputation, therefore insight into how people's perceived images of place – that is, what associations come to mind when consumers (tourists, investors, students, expats, traders) think of a place, is crucial. Through place branding, localities try to influence these perceived images, but, of course, their span of control is limited, as place images tend to be influenced through the mass media, popular culture, word of mouth and Web 2.0. Therefore, analysis of the projected image of place – that is, people's expressed opinions of a given site – is a prerequisite input to the brand strategy. However, there is a fundamental difference between place branding and place marketing in the alignment of image and place identity. Branding is to build a reputation based on a coherent, compelling, unique, omnipresent sense of place. Therefore, this third and last aspect should also be studied.

**TABLE 12.1 Constructive elements of identity**

| Structural | Semi-static | Changing signifiers | Coloring elements |
|---|---|---|---|
| Location | Size | Great events/Great heroes | Past symbolism |
| History | Physical appearance | Food/Architecture/Arts/Literature/Popular | Past behavior |
| | Inner mentality | culture Language/Traditions/Rituals/Folk | Communication |

*Sources*: Govers and Go (2009), based on Noordman (2004).

## Perceived Place Identity Analysis

Place identity is constructed through historical, political, religious and cultural discourses, embedded in local knowledge and influenced by power struggles. National, cultural, natural, social and religious assets become important identifiers for place branding, in order to create appropriate expectations. Place branding therefore starts by studying the constructive elements as depicted in Table 12.1. Useful secondary sources include historical literature, museums, historians or academics with local knowledge. As several studies in Part 2 of our book (Govers and Go 2009) attested, resident perception surveys of local identity might also prove useful. Because such research appeals to people's own sense of identity, rootedness or nostalgia, and because it often involves political contestation and community reflection, it is often quite easy to generate media attention and link such surveys to contests and cross-medial viral publicity actions, thus stimulating response and local involvement. Of course, this might include political risks and therefore requires thorough reflection and subtle propositions. However, with consumers becoming increasingly vocal, joining the conversation through Web 2.0, new opportunities arise.

An interesting example is www.nzedge.com; created by New Zealanders, Brian Sweeney and Kevin Roberts (CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi, and author of *Lovemarks* 2005). This online community instills a new way of thinking about New Zealand's identity, people, stories, achievements and place in the world. It aims to strengthen identity and foster the global community of New Zealanders as well as to substantiate identity and compatriation on-line. How? Through stories of New Zealand heroes who made their mark on world culture. Furthermore, via a features section that covers contemporary New Zealand achievements and issues through essays, forums and features. Finally, with a media page which surveys New Zealand as featured in the world's online media, www.nzedge.com provides inspirational content for New Zealand's branding efforts.

## Perceived Place Image Analysis

Place image was first defined by Hunt (1971, 1975) as the total set of impressions of a place or an individual's overall perception. It has also been referred to as 'reputation' or a 'mental portrayal or prototype' of what the travel experience might look like. Such an image is generally accepted to be based on attributes, functional consequences (or expected benefits) and the symbolic meanings or psychological characteristics consumers associate with a specific place. Therefore, image influences positioning and ultimately our behavior toward other places. Also, it involves both cognitive and affective (emotional) elements and is a clear antecedent of perceived quality, satisfaction, decision-making and post-purchase behavior (Bigné *et al.* 2001). Gallarza *et al.* (2002) wrote an influential article on the topic of place image, reviewing a total of sixty-five works written since Hunt published his work in 1975.

Locked in the human mind, the concept of image can be seen to have a private character. It renders the measurement of perceived place image through standardized survey methodologies a very difficult task. Our past research therefore focused on free elicitation of consumers' stories about places in order to bring to the surface deeper emotions and cognitive associations. Doing this in an online environment creates opportunities for collecting digitized data that facilitates computerized content analysis. This also allows for tag-cloud type analysis using software such as CATPAC and Thoughtview. For a similar interesting general branding example, see www.brandtags.net.

## Projected Image Analysis

Projected place image analysis is about understanding how place is being 'talked about'. Perceived image is influenced through various image-formation agents. Most importantly, people's own experiences influence their perceptions; these are referred to as organic images. In addition, the so-called solicited and unsolicited organic images are the stories that people share with each other, either face-to-face or now increasingly online through Web 2.0 applications, either on request or spontaneously (Gartner 1993). While these organic images on the demand side are the most influential, there are several other image-formation agents that impact people's perceptions. Induced agents are the supply-driven communication efforts – that is, overt induced agents such as marketing communications/advertising campaigns/brochures that are initiated by place marketers (tourism promotion boards or destination marketing organizations; export, trade and investment agencies; convention bureaus; ministries of foreign affairs; chambers of commerce; private businesses and intermediaries (tour operators/travel agents); financial institutions, larger corporations and/or trade associations). Covert induced agents are endorsements by celebrities, travel writers, the press in general or through popular culture. These are often the result of press and public relations initiatives and many decision-makers are at present actively trying to lobby creative industries and sports agencies in order to attract movie shoots, TV shows, music and sports events and other forms of popular culture in an effort to raise awareness and influence place image. So-called autonomous agents serve an intermediary role connecting supply and demand. For example, independently produced guidebooks, news, articles, reports, documentaries, popular culture and programs about the place in the media have high credibility and market penetration. Increasingly blurred boundaries between induced or autonomous agents necessitate the monitoring of conversation. This also requires data collection via the main channels: the press (written or verbal); social networks; printed matter; and third-party websites.

In terms of projected place image, we used content analysis of pictures and text to analyze the online marketing communications of twenty Dubai-based websites, including the majority of the most influential actors in the various tourism sectors (Govers and Go 2005). The same method can also be applied, through the manual analysis of brochures, travel guides, press clippings and other sources in which places are represented. It has proved to be a useful technique to identify how local and international stakeholders alike, including press, travel professionals and citizen opinion leaders, project place image. Various providers offer monitoring services based on content analysis of the news reporting in international media: www.mediatenor.com provides media intelligence; East West Communications offers country brand indexes and nation brand communications reports; and Google Trends links search traffic statistics to news reporting, while www.Radian6.com provides social media monitoring and web-analytic tools.

## PLACE BRAND ESSENCE

The design of the place brand essence includes, at the base, the brand identity. It incorporates the brand roots, values, vision, scope, name, visual identity, behavior, and the narratives of place. Moreover, place brand essence should be built on a value match between place identity and the target audience, also referred to as brand positioning. Finally, the brand essence involves, as with any brand, a reference to the quality and service characteristics of the economic offering. Yet, as the place brand essence offers a hedonic consumption experience as opposed to physical products, we argue that it should also involve the formulation of a vision about the characteristics of the place experience that people can expect as visitors.

## Brand Identity

Formulation of the authentic brand values, based on the perceived place identity analysis, is by far the most important task in defining the brand identity, from which all else follows. For example, the USA reflects values of freedom, consumerism and opportunity. Flanders (the northern, Dutch-speaking part of Belgium) brands indulgence, charm, abundance and vibrancy. The Welsh nation's brand values include human place; real people; challenger spirit; and original thinking. The brand values should subsequently be reflected in brand guidelines that create a sense of belonging and purpose; authenticity; consistency and sensory appeal. The brand guidelines could include directions on the use of pictures, colors, shapes/symbols, language/slogans, icons, sound, service, traditions and rituals (Lindstrom 2005). It is essential to reflect the same brand values and brand identity both on- and offline. The homepages of the Dutch tourism, export and trade agencies, as well as the Twitter pages, provide a good-practice example of a well-executed online brand identity design consistent with the dominating national color of orange. Check out:

www.nfia.com;

www.visitholland.com;

www.hollandtrade.com; and

www.twitter.com/visitHolland.

## Experience Concept

Often, investors, tourists, traders, migrant workers or students may experience things that they did not expect. As they build their perceived place images on second-hand information only, these often tend to be stereotypical or misconceived perceptions of reality. Visitors will repeatedly change their perceptions of place and it is therefore essential to link the place brand to an experiential concept. In doing so, it needs to be taken into account that experiences involve an interaction between the individual and the physical or virtual and social environment, through the senses, interacting with imagery processes in the mind (cognitive processes linking perceptual observations to existing concepts, contexts and meanings, including processes of imagination creating fantasies), giving ‘meaning’ and generating emotions (affect) and actions (conative reactions) – active participation or passive gazing – as well as social interactions.

Places therefore need to design optimal place brand experiences by imagineering experience environments, through dialogue between (potential) visitors and experience networks (public and private parties involved in the place brand offering), to establish clear goals and expectations in terms of potential experiences that can be co-created. Access to the experience network should allow visitors to pick and choose, and co-create a personal experience through active or passive involvement and relating to others while finding a balance between the challenges and their personal skills. For example, some people will enjoy pure passive entertainment, while others want to be challenged. However, they all need to be able to assess the risks involved in certain activities and need to be able to access information on ‘where they are’ in the process. Given our place branding approach, where identity/essence play an important role on the one hand, and the physical and vicarious experience on the other, we refer to a continuum that may be seen to represent ‘the struggle for reality dilemma’, ranging from, say, ‘fake’/‘spin’ to ‘real life’ or ‘authenticity’. Such a continuum helps to explain the multiple human choices, particularly in terms of the paradox between Disneyfication (Disney were the inventors of imagineering) on the one hand and reactions against fakeness and spin on the other. With the individualized search for personal experiences, it therefore needs to be appreciated that organizational transparency in the experience network is required as it facilitates the exchange of information and provision of feedback on the progress of performance and risk assessments at touch points where sensory stimuli link perceptions to cognitive and affective processes, thus enhancing the brand.

There also needs to be an analogy between the physical experience of place and vicarious place experiences such as in virtual worlds, social networks, augmented realities, television, movies, music, arts, traveling exhibitions, events, online videos or blogs. Interesting opportunities are currently being developed. In designing virtual experiences vividness and interactivity (together facilitating telepresence) are essential prerequisites for creating strong vicarious place brand encounters. In addition, visuals and narratives are significant vehicles in the projection of rich place brand experiences, and the more the senses are stimulated, the richer the event. Ultimately, place branding requires the effective management of human interaction in experience environments and how these are consistently marketed. New technologies create tremendous opportunities. In the online virtual world of Second

Life, for example, one is able to walk though the centre of Amsterdam and experience the city without the need to travel. Also, the Mexican Tourist Board has created a Ruta Maya experience in Second Life and, as Joshua Fouts illustrates in Chapter 11 of this book, Muslims can now even simulate a virtual hajj to Mecca in the immersive 3D world of Second Life.

### Value Match

Decision-makers responsible for place coordination and control need to make strategic choices about how to match brand values with the personal values or lifestyles of the target groups (tourists, investors, traders, migrant workers, students) they are serving. This means that they will have to decide to whom they will market and to whom they will not; and what they want to be and what not. In addition, the core brand values (even though these require choices and resolve) can be communicated and implemented by different means, building the relationships with the various target groups in unique and engaging ways. This could be compared with traditional segmentation, targeting and positioning strategies, not based on demographic or geographic characteristics, however, but on psychographic exploration. People's personal values, motivation and lifestyles will self-select appropriate places and co-create experiences, but it is essential to have some idea about the personas that are targeted. It also requires value-matched customized interfaces at touch points; not just in communication but, for example, also on websites and in the physical environment. Unfortunately, the application of value-matched interfacing, using computer technologies, is still very limited. The opportunities and technological capabilities seem obvious, but at best, place marketing websites apply different color schemes based on behavioral segmentation data. The focus is still on content. Many websites nowadays will provide customized content based on consumers' past search and selection behaviors and their match with peer profiles (which is referred to as collaborative filtering of content, such as on Amazon.com), but it seems obvious that this could be linked to online brand value matching, adapting look and feel, tone of voice, design and interactive media based on dynamic profiling. Up to now, this potential seems to have been largely underutilized.

## PLACE BRAND IMPLEMENTATION

To implement the place brand essence triangle, several elements are needed. An experience concept requires the construction of events, infrastructure, other symbolic actions (iconic or authentic) and a change in policies. In other words, place branding cannot be based on communication alone; it also requires actual product development. Such building of place experiences and consistent projection of the brand essence requires cooperation from many stakeholders and lastly, of course, consistent communication.

## Construction

Experience concepts and brand associations need to be realized in infrastructural or cultural projects, events, museums or traveling exhibitions. In other words, it needs coordinated innovation aligned to the place brand strategy. As Anholt (2008) puts it, "Don't talk unless you have something to say" and "Actions speak louder than words." With place branding, this century seems to have introduced the importance of "landmarks"; what we refer to as, "experience icons". Icons and world wonders of the past and present – the Egyptian, Greek, Mayan and Inca structures that still stand; the Great Wall of China; the Taj Mahal in India; the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty in New York; the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco; the Eiffel Tower in Paris; Big Ben in London; the Corcovado-Christ statue in Rio de Janeiro; or the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur – seem to have been based on religious, power or security concerns. However, in this century, many new icons are built for the sake of the consumption experience. Perhaps one of the first was the Burj Al Arab in Dubai, which, as a hotel and leisure complex, opened its doors just before the start of the new millennium. It put Dubai on the world map as a tourist destination and global hub years before most of the other megaprojects in Dubai were announced. Other known examples that are often used as examples of best practice in relation to place branding, and that could be categorized as experience icons, are the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, the Palm Islands in Dubai, and Beijing's Bird Nest and Water Cube. Does this indicate that the consumption experience is the new religion heralding the experience economy? Perhaps not, if we consider the fact that the Roman Coliseum and other amphitheatres were built millennia ago. Nevertheless, allowing for these few exceptions and the fact that experience icons such as Las Vegas and the Disney parks have been around for some time, place branding on experience icons seems to be the new strategy for many places, if we consider additional examples such as, for example, the Millennium Dome in London; the Eden Project in Cornwall, UK; the London Eye; the Shanghai Expo; or the Autostadt in Wolfsburg, Germany.

Of course, this does not mean that there can be no place branding without iconic projects. On the contrary; many would argue that grassroots local initiatives with a sense of belonging and authenticity can be just as effective and probably more efficient and sustainable. Many, if not most, countries, regions or cities already accommodate unique and worthwhile experience environments or cultural assets, which are sometimes undeveloped or perceived by locals as being uninteresting. By attaching value-matched experience concepts to them and developing them through imagineering, renovation, accessibility programs, edutainment remodeling and/or upgrading through events and festivals, changed policies or other non-iconic symbolic actions, such resources can be exploited in order to enhance place brand positioning to attract tourists, talent, investors and trade. The many successful waterfront developments and revitalization projects in some of the world's major cities are examples of this. Many new opportunities are created by the integration of virtual and physical worlds. For example, New York City (NYC) cooperates with Google in order to make the product offering available through Google maps, facilitating navigation of the city and its restaurants, bars, hotels and points of interest through the use of GPS-enabled mobile phones. It will also provide driving, subway or walking directions and even allows orientation using Google Maps' Street View on your mobile device. In the NYC visitor center one can pick and choose and co-create a customized impromptu digital itinerary to tour the city, and preview an aerial tour of your personalized experience on a video wall using Google Earth technology.

## Communication

But, regardless of the importance of physical appearance, of course, if places want to maintain their image in future, communication will also become increasingly important. With technology, information space is expanding at lightning speed and getting one's message across to the right consumer at the right time will be essential. However, the same technology will facilitate that, and places will need to start preparing themselves to manage their narratives and project the same images consistently through the right channels, but in a flexible, customized manner. The new World Wide Web allows for the exchange of information on the internet – for example, through RSS feeds and the proliferation of Web 2.0 applications. This, for example, is one of the reasons for the success of Tourism Queensland's Best Job in the World campaign, feeding Web 2.0 dynamics into traditional media. Other examples are the 100% Pure New Zealand YouTube channel or the Visit Holland Twitter pages.

RSS syndicated content includes such data as news feeds, events listings, news stories, headlines, project updates, excerpts from discussion forums or even corporate information. Even blog content can be fed into RSS, making mass peer-to-peer communication even more accessible, further encouraging active bloggers. This technology would allow place marketers to manage content all the way through to the consumers' desktops and mobile devices, supporting a strong branding strategy and management of diverse perceptions. Combined with other technologies such as those provided through ambient intelligence, augmented reality and virtual environments, this would allow for completely customized but consistent content feeding and customer communication. For example, the new www.layar.com technology provides a mobile phone application that shows you what is around you by displaying real-time digital information, as on a web browser, but also, as an additional layer on top of the camera display view (an information layer supplementing the camera's view of reality) providing customized ambient intelligent information, also referred to as augmented reality.

## Cooperation

But brands need to be facilitated in dynamic experience environments co-created by multiple stakeholders (private, public and civil society actors). Consulting, co-opting and involving stakeholders is therefore probably the toughest part of the place branding exercise. We contend that place brand communities are the way forward and facilitate these through our www.Placebrandz.com initiative. Nevertheless, this is a very complicated process, but just as corporate branding campaigns, if properly done, can have a dramatic effect on the morale, team spirit and sense of purpose of the company's own employees, so a proper place branding campaign can provide for a common sense of purpose and pride among stakeholders and residents. Nicholas Ind (2004) refers to this as "living the brand", while Hankinson (2004, 2007) refers to place brands as relational networks linking customers, service providers and other stakeholders.

Again, technologies provide opportunities here. For example, www.thevoiceofwales.com attempts to build a brand community for Wales. The website mentions that it has everything stakeholders need to know about communicating the Wales brand. Whether they are talking to tourists, trading partners, students or the generally curious, the website will act as their guide. It clearly explains the brand story and provides a range of content to give stakeholders a deeper understanding of the Wales brand. It is only through value-oriented, networked cooperatives and shared vision that a place brand community can evolve. Through well-cultivated brand communities it is hoped that places can build sustainable brand identities, create meaning and generate the knowledge that can be managed through the processes of community building (Van het Klooster *et al.* 2004).

## CONCLUSION

Clearly, technology provides many opportunities for places to build strong brands without the need for big budgets. Tourism Queensland's Best Job in the World campaign is a good example of this. It won the prestigious Cannes Lions PR Award and generated tremendous brand awareness with a limited budget. The challenge was to create global awareness of the islands of the Great Barrier Reef. Instead of spending large sums on paid television advertising, Tourism Queensland posted classified ads all over the world offering what they called the 'best job in the world'; a position as island caretaker with a US$8,800 a month salary and a rent-free three-bedroomed villa with plunge pool. On day one of the campaign www.islandreefjob.com received four million hits an hour (more hits in the UK than google.com). After the six-week application process the website had received almost 3.5 million unique visitors and almost 35,000 video applications had been posted. This generated 6,000 news stories worldwide and an estimated US$80 million media coverage value.

If place branding is about reflecting place identities and building unique reputations, awareness and perceived images in the minds of a global audience, Queensland has done a neat job in an innovative way, exploiting the age of the internet. The campaign reflects the beauty of the region and the easy-going non-conformist identity of the Australians, but what made it a success is the smart use of all image formation agents apart from overt induced agents (paid advertising by an identified sponsor). Covert induced agents (classified ads) were used to launch the campaign. This resulted in a shockwave of word of mouth and mouse through Web 2.0 (email forwards, blogs, mentions of social networking sites). This was then picked up by news agencies and in television programs (autonomous agents). And finally, even organic agents were exploited by allowing enthusiasts to become part of the campaign by uploading their video applications and hoping for an invitation to travel to the island for job interviews.

This example shows what e-branding can do in the age of the social web. Traditional marketing promotion and spin will not win the hearts and minds of a global audience any longer. Creative use of technologies will allow places to co-create identities, experiences and imaginaries. Involvement of stakeholders, public and private actors and civil society, as well as the global audience of vocal individuals who take part in the conversation will be key.

On the other hand, relying totally on the dynamics of the social web will also be risky. As Keen (2007) notes, the cult of the amateur might kill our culture and assault our economy, so, as the Queensland case illustrates, initiation, guidance and readjustment by public agencies is still needed, but in a transparent, accessible and innovative manner looking for dialogue. This will allow for many future opportunities, for both practitioners as well as research.

## CHAPTER 13

# News Coverage of Foreign Place Brands: Implications for Communication Strategies

*Roland Schatz & Christian Kolmer*

### PLACE BRAND REPRESENTATION, NEWS MEDIA AND AGENDA-SETTING

How are foreign place brands represented? Who has the power to represent foreign place brands? And what is left unrepresented of foreign place brands? Place brands of cities and regions are represented variously by government agencies, tourist offices, but also by vicarious means – that is, via the literature, the movies, music or the internet. For the potency of the latter's influence, consider, for example, how the movie Crocodile Dundee boosted tourist arrivals to Australia. These forms of representation shape the perception of particular place brands and consumers' attitude towards them (Lippman 1922), thereby impacting the environment in which enterprises conduct their trade. While the literature on place brand representation and popular culture continues to expand, in recent years little academic research attention has been devoted to the topic of how the media impact on foreign place branding practice. This observation justifies this chapter, which looks at how decision-makers can leverage agenda-setting methodology and enquiry to influence the formation of the media agenda. In particular, it argues that the challenges confronting decision-makers go beyond the national framework. In an age of "international integration", economic activities and communications also move beyond geographic boundaries. Within such a framework the media play an important role in influencing the public awareness of foreign place brands. Because of their remoteness we tend to have only limited direct contact and knowledge of foreign place brands. Consequently, our knowledge about them tends to be strongly influenced

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by media coverage. The news about foreign place brands flows into the living rooms of households and the boardrooms of companies. News diffusion follows the specific rules of the media system. In particular, these rules are guided by the processes of selection, condensation and framing, which, in turn, modify the media image of foreign place brands.

Politicians and peace activists habitually complain that news in general, and foreign news in particular, "distorts" reality. This has led, for example, to calls for a new world information order (see Köchler 1985), based on the perception that international news flows are shaped by Western-dominated news organizations, which in turn support the worldwide cultural hegemony of Western culture. The emergence of transnational TV news programs based in other world regions – such as, for example, Al Jazeera – has changed the landscape of international news. But many channels remain under the control of a small and tightly controlled group of key players, especially international providers of global video news content – for example, APTN or Reuter Television news.

While media effects research focused on persuasion and attitude change for a long time during the twentieth century, agenda-setting theory, developed by Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald Shaw in the late 1960s and early 1970s, led to a significant change of perspective. McCombs and Shaw asked how the topic structure of news influenced the perception of those issues by the public: did the media agenda correspond to the agenda of the public? In their original Chapel Hill study, McCombs and Shaw compared the topic structure of news during the 1968 US presidential campaign to what the voters said were key issues in the campaign (McCombs and Shaw 1972).

The relationship between public opinion and news content has been disputed for some time, as journalists maintain that their news selections "mirror" the flow of events and the importance of issues – for example, evolving from the concerns of the public. Agenda-setting theory, on the other hand, states that the media agenda influences the public agenda. Timeline studies, though very expensive and time-consuming, leave no doubt about the direction, and extent, of the media agenda's influence on the public agenda. The Media Tenor institute, which has been analyzing international news content continuously and consistently since 1994, has conducted extensive research that proves the validity of the agenda-setting theory in several areas of life, ranging from politics to business and the sector of NGOs (see www.mediatenor.com).

While the first conclusion from agenda-setting theory emphasizes the role of salience – as, without coverage, news frames and news biases are without relevance for the effects of news on the public – further research has incorporated the impact of valuations and thematic frames into the argumentative nexus of agenda-setting theory. For example, the importance of issues is related to the evaluation of protagonists with regard to those issues, as topic structures influence the coverage of protagonists not only in terms of visibility but also in connection with their valuation (Scheufele 2001).

Moreover, the attributes that are connected with issues and protagonists in the news also affect the perception of them by the public. From these assumptions, some questions can be developed concerning the media coverage of foreign places in international TV news and its impact on the perception of countries and cities:

1. How strong is the visibility of places in international news and how extensive is the distribution of awareness?
2. How does visibility of places develop over time, and how strongly is it influenced by different perspectives in diverse media markets?
3. Which factors control the selection of foreign news, and which issues shape the media image of foreign places?
4. What is the tone of foreign coverage, and how strongly is it influenced by the issues that are selected and by the different perspectives in diverse media markets?

## METHODOLOGY OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

Agenda-setting theory postulates the influence of media content on the perception of the public, but its validity cannot simply be inferred from the correlation between the media agenda and the public agenda. In order to assess the direction of the causal links, an ongoing monitoring of media content and public opinion is necessary. Only long-term uninterrupted timeline studies are able to track the development of news content.

The content of the news media can be measured in a reliable and systematic way using the established method of content analysis. Content analysis "is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson 1952). There are many different types of content analysis, ranging from simple frequency counts – increasingly done by computers, based on media databases – to complicated assessments of arguments and media frames. The results of this study are based on the analysis of the content of TV news in eleven media markets by trained coders of the Zurich-based research institute Media Tenor International, who watch the entire newscasts of the following news programs:

- USA: ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN (International Desk)
- UK: BBC 1 10 o'clock news, BBC 2 Newsnight, ITV News at Ten, BBC World News
- Germany: ARD Tagesschau and ARD Tagesthemen, RTL Aktuell, ZDF heute, ZDF heute journal
- France: TF 1
- Italy: RAI Uno
- Switzerland: SF DRS Tagesschau, SF Börse, SF Eco, SF Rundschau
- Spain: TVE 1
- Turkey: TRT
- Arabic satellite TV: Al-Arabiyah, Al-Jazeera, Al-Manar, Dubai TV, LBC (Lebanon), Nile News
- China: CCTV
- South Africa: SABC 3 News @ One, SABC 2 Afrikaans News, SABC 3 English News, SABC 3 News @ 10, SABC 3: Africa News Update, SABC SiSwati/Ndebele News, SABC Sotho News, SABC Venda/Tsonga News, SABC Zulu/Xhosa News, E-TV News, Summit TV

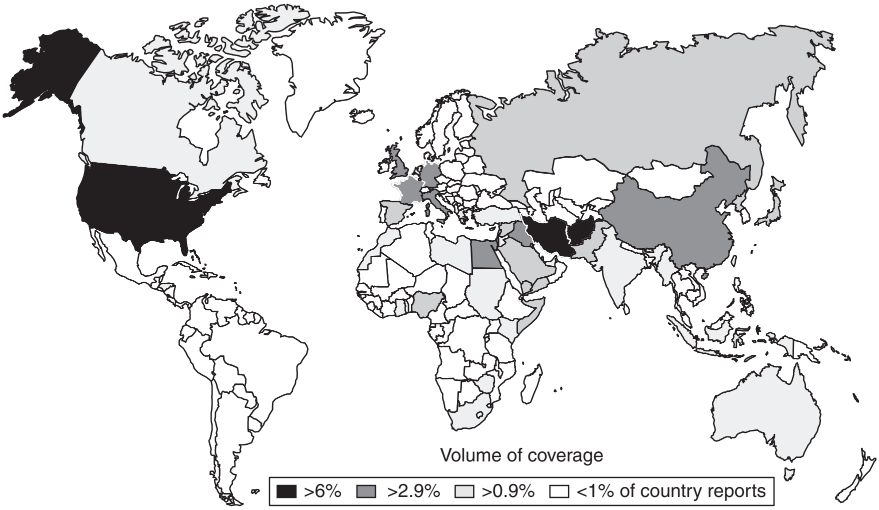
The analysis on the level of the individual news stories measures the location, the main topic and the main protagonists. The tone of coverage for the main protagonists is measured on a scale ranging from 5 (clearly negative) to 1 (clearly positive) separately, for the explicit evaluation using positive or negative terms and for implicit evaluation originating from the context. (Media Tenor operates with professional coders, who undergo an in-depth training process. It publishes the inter-coder reliability scores on its website.) While Media Tenor conducts this analysis as an ongoing process with German data dating back to 1994, and UK and US data dating back to 2001, the results presented in this study relate to the period 1 July to 31 August 2009. This period was selected in order to incorporate data from Turkish and Chinese TV news, which have been added to the media set recently. Overall 70,978 news stories have been analyzed.

## RESULTS: COPING WITH NEGATIVITY

While the self-conception of journalistic values focuses especially on investigation and writing qualities, a major part of journalists' work is news selection, which relates to the important information function of the media. The effects of news selection by the journalists working in the mass media is evident from the vast differences in the visibility for different countries in international TV news: the four most often covered regions – the USA, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq – already account for 27 percent of all reports focusing on individual countries. At the lower end of the distribution, 139 countries together get 25 percent of the coverage (see Figure 13.1).

News from regions in conflict and high-status nations is covered on an ongoing basis, but most other countries appear only infrequently – depending on the occurrence of extraordinary events. Most of these are in themselves the main source of negativity, which explains the dominantly negative flavor of international news coverage. Accidents, natural disasters, conflicts and crime put countries on the map of international TV news, while reconstruction and prevention, improvements in domestic security and acts of reconciliation seldom make it into the news bulletins, at least when they happen far away from the home markets. But even in the coverage of wars

**FIGURE 13.1** **Visibility of countries in foreign news, 11 countries, July/August 2009**



*Source*: Based on 21,824 stories from 39 international TV news programs.

and military actions there are strong differences between the conflicts that receive ongoing coverage and the so-called "forgotten wars". The civil war in Sudan has escaped international awareness for a long time, despite its long-drawn-out nature, which has caused the displacement of a larger number of people for a long period. The news selection in the case of armed conflicts is influenced by many factors, ranging from news control at the hands of the war parties, the strategies of media coverage on the one hand to the logistics of the international news agencies and TV stations on the other. The coverage of the conflicts in turn influences the activities of the conflict parties, which can generate new events that drive coverage of the conflict – and thus have a negative influence on the visibility of other developments.

The world map of visibility masks strong differences between the various media markets. First, the eleven TV markets analyzed differ markedly with regard to the attention paid to foreign news. While, for example, British and German TV devote 58.5 percent and 44.7 percent of their newscasts to foreign news, but Turkish, Chinese and US TV are much more inward-looking: in Turkey, the share of foreign news was as low as 23.5 percent, in China 28 percent and in the USA TV news 36.3 percent. But the programs from Europe show regional preferences as much as do TV transmissions from other continents: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq, for example, are much more visible not only in Arab satellite TV but also in US and UK news, obviously as a consequence of the strong military involvement of those countries in the region. Another stunning example is Africa, which figures strongly only in South African news, whose share of reports from the regions is three times higher than the average share of Africa in international TV news (21.1 percent versus 7.2 percent).

That said, only few places can depend on an ongoing interest in their situation from TV journalists. Even a mega-event such as the Olympic Games has only limited long-term effects on the visibility of a region: one year after the Beijing Olympics, China played no dominant role in international news, with a share of just 3.2 percent. In France and Spain the visibility of China was markedly lower – 1.6 percent and 1.4 percent, respectively. This compares somewhat negatively with the long-term coverage of selected cities in the period from July 2008 to June 2009: Here, Beijing received more than three times the coverage of the second-placed New York (see Table 13.1).

Volume is only a precondition for creating a positive media image, but the dominant negative character of international news also creates unwelcome awareness, which is evident from the high visibility of the crisis regions in the Middle East. Among the many factors that shape news selection, negativity has been so obvious that the notion that good news is no

**TABLE 13.1 Coverage of selected locations in 36 international TV news programs, July 2008 to September 2009**

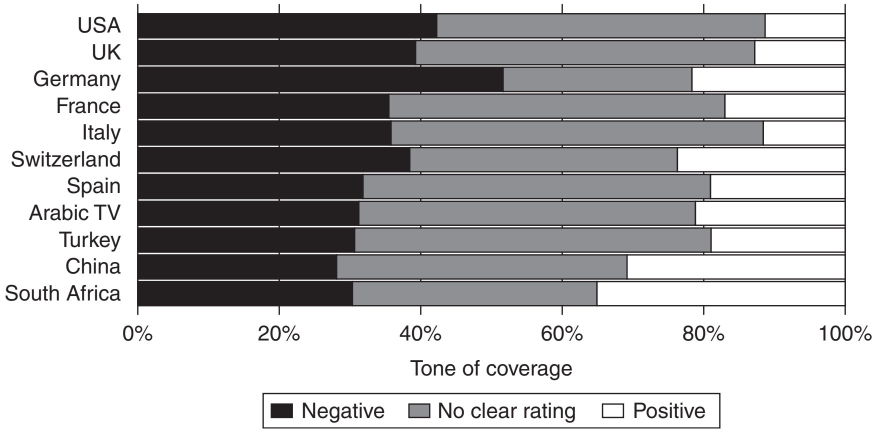
| City | Number |
|---|---|
| Beijing | 1,455 |
| New York | 410 |
| London | 381 |
| Paris | 316 |
| Hong Kong | 301 |
| Jerusalem | 279 |
| Rome | 256 |
| Mumbai | 254 |
| Shanghai | 246 |
| Brussels | 201 |
| Los Angeles | 159 |
| Moscow | 102 |
| Davos | 97 |
| Madrid | 96 |
| Baghdad | 90 |
| Barcelona | 69 |
| Amsterdam | 43 |
| Munich | 41 |
| Athens | 39 |
| Cairo | 39 |
| Strasbourg | 39 |

*Source*: Based on 4,924 stories about places in 36 international TV news programs.

news has become proverbial (Kepplinger and Weissbecker 1991). In so far as the media fulfill an important function for society, highlighting dangers and deficits, the publication of negative news is to a certain extent necessary. But a look at the dominance of "bad news" in foreign coverage exposes the destructive potential of TV coverage for the perception of foreign places by the international public. On balance, almost a third (32.7 percent) of foreign news stories painted a negative picture of the protagonists, while 20 percent conveyed good news. But this average masks strong differences between the various media markets (see Figure 13.2).

Most striking is the extreme negativity of German news, while Chinese and South African TV news contained a significantly higher proportion of positive news. Nevertheless, the conclusion drawn from this small sample

**FIGURE 13.2** Tonality of foreign news, 11 countries, July/August 2009



*Source*: Based on 21,723 stories in 39 international TV news programs.

is inevitably that TV news paints a scary picture of the world beyond the borders of one's home country.

The volume of coverage for individual countries is not connected to the level of negativity at large in a simple way; this shows a comparison of the 160 countries that appeared into the news during the two months of the analysis period (see Table 13.2)

On balance, the four countries most often mentioned – the USA, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq – are characterized by the highest share of negative and the lowest share of positive news. A lower volume of coverage is associated with negative reporting as well, but there are also more opportunities for positive news: seventy-seven out of the 160 countries that were covered in international TV news were described in at least a neutral way. Out of these, thirteen got a mention in more than 100 news stories, most notably the UK, France, Egypt, Germany and Italy.

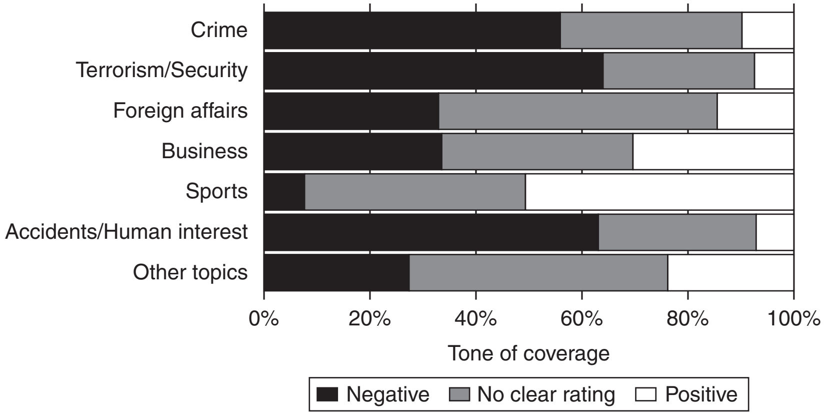
But there is an important limitation to this result: positive coverage is confined to only few issues, primarily to sports (see Figure 13.3). While on balance foreign news portrays foreign countries negatively with regard to all other issues, there is at least some scope for positive coverage in business news and in the fields of culture, science and technology (summed up under "Other topics" in Figure 13.3). Sports news is the one big exception to the rule of negativity in news selection, as it is focused on the winners. That said, the positive coverage of sports reports does not necessarily reflect positively

**TABLE 13.2 Rating of countries in foreign news, based on the volume of coverage, 11 countries, July/August 2009**

| | Percentage of negative stories | Percentage of positive stories |
|---|---|---|
| 139 countries with a share of less than 1 percent of all stories | 34.6 | 20.6 |
| 13 countries with a share of more than 0.9 and less than 3 percent of all stories | 36.6 | 23.5 |
| 4 countries with a share of more than 2.9 and less than 6 percent of all stories | 25.6 | 31.0 |
| 4 countries with a share of more than 5.9 percent | 40.6 | 14.5 |

*Source*: Based on 21,723 stories in 39 international TV news programs.

**FIGURE 13.3 Tonality of foreign news, 11 countries, July/August 2009: comparison of topics**

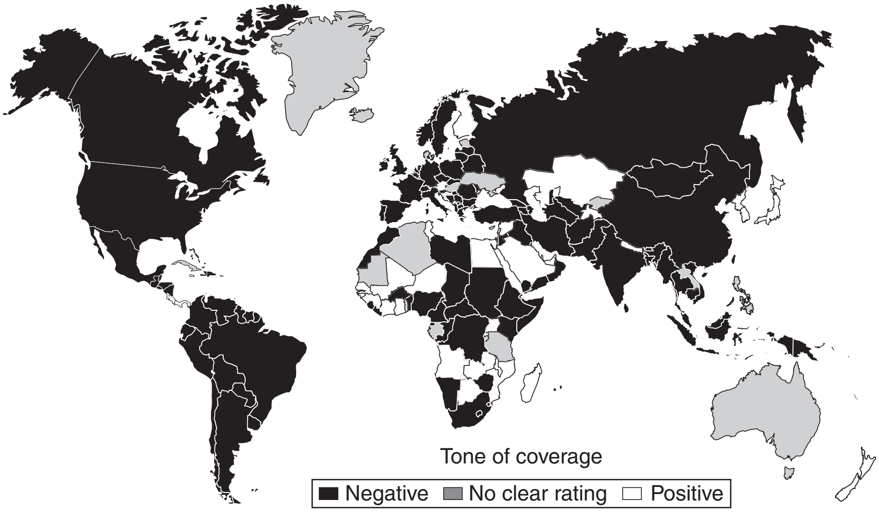


*Source*: 21,723 stories in 39 international TV news programs.

on the location at all. While there is some scope for positive coverage of foreign places in foreign news, this is not sufficient to generate an overall impression.

The impact of negative news on the world view propagated by international TV news therefore becomes manifestly clear, when sports news is

**FIGURE 13.4** **Rating of countries in foreign news, 11 countries, July/August 2009**



*Source*: 21,723 stories in 39 international TV news programs.

stripped from the analysis of foreign coverage of individual countries (see Figure 13.4). Most parts of the world are covered negatively. There are at least some opportunities for positive reporting in media markets with a stronger regional focus: South African TV is open to positive news from the African continent, but with a low volume of reporting the risk of negative events becoming the dominant aspect continues to loom large.

From farther away, reporting generally becomes more negative, as is shown in the overall negative perception of South America. Because the media sample does not contain any media from this continent there was not one country portrayed at least with a balanced media image over the course of the two months analyzing international TV news.

A look at the world map in Figure 13.4 shows some strange results – for example, the positive coverage of North Korea. The analyzed period of two months is quite long compared to the regular sample of international news studies, but the period of July/August 2009 covered an abnormal moment in the history of the Korean peninsula: former US president, Bill Clinton, flew to Pyongyang and in successful negotiations achieved the release of two US journalists held captive by the regime of Kim Jong il. While coverage of North Korea has been manifestly negative since 2006, this period witnessed one of the few exceptions. Reports about North Korea in German, British, US, Arab and South African newscasts were positive in only seven out of the forty-five months from January 2006 to September 2009. This example demonstrates the risks of choosing periods that are two short or of using time samples, when the analysis is interest not only in news structures but also in the concrete media image of countries, political protagonists or business groups.

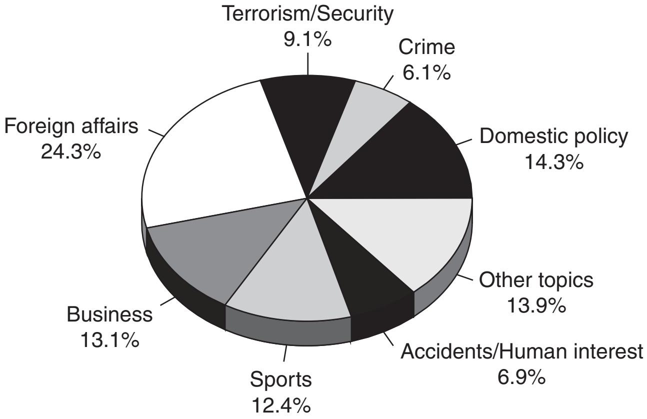
Taking this exception into account, the conclusion is unavoidable that news coverage of foreign places is not a resource that contributes to a positive image but in fact presents more of an obstacle. The event-driven news selection process in international TV programs leads to a media image characterized by the downside of events. A media presence, which is driven only by the flow of events, therefore constitutes more of a media risk than an opportunity. As a consequence, countries, regions and cities must take the initiative to generate news, to counter the ever-threatening flow of negative news. Even when the messages are not in themselves strictly positive they are effective as a counterweight against negativism and contribute to thematic diversity. Long-term research by Media Tenor in the field of business coverage has proved that a great variety of issues addressed and sources quoted is key element in building a sustainable media image and establishing a dependable relationship with journalists (see http://www.mediatenor.com/smi_MT_tools_goldenrules.php).

There is some scope for positive, or at least neutral, coverage, which might evolve especially from the fields of business, science, technology, culture and travel (see Figure 13.3). The overall salience of these issues is, on the other hand, rather limited: while foreign affairs, terrorism, crime and accidents account for 46.4 percent of overall reporting about foreign places, business is given only 13.1 percent of cover, and the other issues that offer some opportunities for generating positive coverage sum up to 13.9 percent (see Figure 13.5).

The topic structure of international news is not as strongly dominated by foreign affairs as one might think. The high share for crime, sports and accidents, which add up to 25 percent of all foreign news, also points to the trend towards infotainment as well as to the international news structures that ensure an uninterrupted flow of sensational news to fill the bulletins of the world.

Examples for the communication of positive messages show that this approach works for places with a low visibility as well as it does for locations with an established volume of coverage. While, for example, the Moravian city of Ostrava was associated in the national news only with crime and the crisis-stricken coal-mining industry after the breakdown of the Eastern Bloc, a clear communication concept addressing issues of culture, travel and education helped to overcome the adverse media climate (Prorok 1999).

**FIGURE 13.5** **Topic structure of foreign news, 11 countries, July/August 2009**



*Source*: 21,723 stories in 39 international TV news programs.

Another example compares the impact of President Obama's visit to Germany in 2009. While the city of Weimar remained under the shadow of the President's visit to the former concentration camp in Buchenwald, coverage of the city of Dresden was much more diverse, showing the cultural heritage and the touristic highlights as well (Kolmer 2009).

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PLACE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The reality of international TV news coverage is characterized by the competition between the protagonists from different walks of life. Not only politicians and companies compete for media awareness, but NGOs, sports clubs, music festivals, museums and universities have also become ever more dependant on the news to connect to their stakeholders and to attract talent and funds. This situation has become a critical success factor as well ensuring place competitiveness.

Mass media play an important role in this context, for several reasons: places that are not visible in the news meet have difficulty in raising the public's awareness in the face of international competition. Moreover, they are at risk from adverse developments and events, which can destroy a positive image or check the development of a positive perception.

News coverage affects the overall perception of places in another respect, because it offers a positive or negative context to the information that the public receives from other channels, such as, for example, the travel press, fictional media, advertising or personal contacts. Negative news undermines the messages that are delivered through these channels and generates obstacles to them picked up by the public at all – who, after all, would be interested in the scenic attractions of a country that is portrayed as being torn by crime and war.

A sensible communication strategy can therefore not dispense with a sustained presence in the news media. As only extraordinary events generate sufficient awareness to reach the international news – but on the other hand are not in themselves sufficient to guarantee ongoing coverage – a communication strategy has to link the core messages to a string of events, which reinforces and perpetuates the media presence. A place branding strategy therefore has to assess in the first place whether the desired attributes of the brand can be communicated over a longer period in a sustainable way, and if the brand image is supported by the key stakeholders, who have to contribute to a successful communication effort.

An understanding of the specific rules of the media system, guided by the processes of selection, condensation and framing, can help to achieve the desired foreign place brand positioning. In particular, from a media perspective, place branding success in international markets depends to a significant degree not only on whether processes function in sequence, but especially whether many protagonists who contribute to an ongoing news flow cooperate with one another around the core messages of a specific campaign. For example, celebrity and drama are the most important news factors contributing to media awareness. A long-term strategy that uses many channels and targets many audiences in different areas, using prominent and authentic communicators, can change the image of a place brand and overcome the possible adversity caused by international news.

## CHAPTER 14

# Place Branding and Intellectual Property

*Antonio P. Russo & Giovanna Segre*

## INTRODUCTION: A CULTURAL-ECONOMIC APPROACH TO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

In the era of "mobility" as the overarching paradigm of social and economic organization and the fittest framework for social science enquiry (Urry 2007), it is relevant – above sectorial considerations – to look at places as being "mobilized" by tourism (Crang 2006; Ooi 2002) and at the development of tourist brands as a vehicle to identify affirmation and communication within a global context.

In this light, place development raises a number of issues, calling for a clever engineering of the best branding strategy to achieve sustainable development through tourism. In this chapter, we aim at establishing a link between regulation instruments and branding strategies.

In fact, in a previous work of ours (Russo and Segre 2009) we argued that different forms of allocation of individual property (either consolidated or fragmented and distributed) are germane to the development of destinations that, for different reasons, can be thought of as unsustainable (Jafari 1989; Knowles and Curtis 1999; Priestley and Mundet 1998). These models were analyzed along a continuum where community participation is traded off against product quality. At one end of the continuum, the "5-star resort" model is one in which the concentration and consolidation of supply structures within "enclosed spaces" favors a high quality, wide-scope production environment but is socially weak, exclusive and not resilient to exogenous changes in fashion and markets. At the other end, the "mass tourist resort" is one in which fragmented property does ensure community participation in tourism development but may lead to destructive endogenous results, prompted by unorganized price-based competition, as far as the quality of products and the competitiveness of the destination is concerned, as argued in Caserta and Russo (2002). Besides, any attempt to reduce the ills of

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either model through the regulation of property – democratization policies promoting an increased participation of the community in the first case, and regeneration policies limiting the extent of destructive competition in the second – only determine an "inversion" of the problem which per se does not represent any significant gain in terms of overall sustainability.

However, a sustainable tourism destination needs *both* to establish a high-quality production environment for the best satisfaction of visitors *and* to enhance, at the same time, welfare for the host community through participation in tourism development. This might be achieved if the entire local tourism supply chain could tie its character or brand to the local culture and creativity, building its strength on the cross-fertilization between different creative production sectors (artistic creations and performances, structural and product design, fashion, gourmet food, superior wines, art and crafts).

In fact, the operation of cultural industries and the valorization of material culture can be regarded as the fuel that feeds not only the growth of the cultural sector itself, but the development of an entire system of access to a territory, potentially leading to a virtuous cycle of culture-led economic development, where local cultural capital, in its tangible and intangible dimension (Throsby 2001), is the leading asset. In particular, as suggested by Santagata (2006), this argument applies to the case of culture-based goods production, defining a path to regional economic development. As far as tourism is concerned, Gnoth (2007) introduces the idea that the destination's capital, expressed in the cultural, social, natural and economic dimensions of a place, has to be taken into account explicitly as a set of relational and living values.

Contrasting with the "unreflexive" gaze of incidental cultural tourists (McKercher 2002), Richards and Wilson (2006) argue that a creative tourist experience depends on active engagement of the tourist-*prosumer* (producer consumer) in the very cultural processes that make a place enticing. The awareness of visitors could be the vehicle by which a relationship of trust is established between hosts/producers and guests/consumers, lowering asymmetric information and abating the prize to moral hazard in the provision of tourist products, which in the long term leads to a downward-spiraling of qualities in the model of Caserta and Russo (2002). Visitor satisfaction in cultural tourism destinations is today seen to be moving away from an often shallow gaze at cultural "objects" and towards creative processes within which visitors develop their own narratives of self (Richards and Wilson 2006). Emotional links with the cultural capital of the place, tangible or intangible, through an active involvement in its genuine manifestations has therefore to be established with the place's visitors. However, this presupposes a practical possibility to learn from – and interact with – local knowledge.

Indeed, important business opportunities for preserving and valorizing the physical and symbolic landscape derives from the visitors' increasing interest in "culturally stimulating" environments, where they are likely to be in contact with new ideas, people, products, social rituals, languages and visual expressions (Maitland 2007).

Moreover, the valorization of local cultural and creative assets through experience-based tourism faces relatively low capital investment barriers, which guarantees that the local community can be actively engaged in tourism development and businesses: the local cultural producers *are* the attraction, and this cannot be taken away from them. While the risk of "commoditization" of culture is still there, some other authors (in the wake of MacCannell 1976) argue that the process of delivering "culture-based" goods and experiences for tourist consumption is not automatically depleting their value to the tourists; see Edensor (1998) and Aramberri (2001). We suggest that the unmediated delivery of these goods from cultural producers to context-aware tourists removes them from the "mainstreaming" pressure of the tourism packagers and mediators.

It is thus deemed necessary to design an alternative development strategy which repositions destinations in a superior position between participation and quality. The tying institutional arrangement that is proposed in Russo and Segre (2009) is collective intellectual property protection. As a result, the reliance of local suppliers entitled to the collective use of a distinctive sign can be signaled, and their shared values and symbolic reference to local creative knowledge and material cultural styles can be promoted. In the rest of this chapter we explore the operational issue of designing and managing collective intellectual property.

## DEVELOPMENT REGULATION: FROM INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS TO COLLECTIVE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

These considerations hint at a particular institutional setting, where the focus is not on physical or tangible private property, but rather on the ownership of ideas and the control over a business culture. Within this context, it is crucial to consider intellectual property (IP), the name given to property arising out of human intellectual effort.[1] IP refers to creations of the mind (inventions, literary and artistic works, and symbols, names, images and designs used in commerce), and is divided into two categories: (i) industrial property, which includes inventions (patents), trademarks, industrial designs and geographic indications of source; and (ii) copyright.[2]

Unlike physical property, intellectual output has the character of a strong public good, since it is nonrival and can therefore be used simultaneously by an unlimited number of people without depriving its owner of its use or enjoyment. Moreover, IP can be formally individual and firm-based, or collective, according to the ownership structure. Collective rights are generally managed, or owned, by a group of peer agents, who associate for this purpose.

The most frequent types of collective IP, and most relevant for our inquiry, are the geographical indication (or its variant, the appellation of origin) and the collective trademark. According to the definition given by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO 2008), geographical indication (GI) "is a sign used on goods that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that place of origin" (p. 15). It signals to consumers that "a product is produced in a certain place and has certain characteristics that are due to that place of production. It may be used by all producers who make their products in the place designated by a geographical indication and whose products share typical qualities" (p. 16). The place of origin may be a village or town, a region or a country. A variant is the appellation of origin (AO) which is "a special kind of geographical indication, used on products that have a specific quality that is exclusively or essentially due to the geographical environment in which the products are produced" (p. 15). In this case, quality and characteristics that are connected to the geographical environment include human factors. As a consequence, while GI do not explicitly foresee quality controls, which are assumed to be implied by the technology of production in a specific location, AO do involve a collective recognition and control of quality.

The establishment of GI and AO guarantees that a product is specific to a given place, stressing that its characteristics are inextricably linked to the local culture, and that territory alone has the natural factors that make the product unique. A collective trademark (CT) is, on the contrary, a trademark – that is, a sign or any combination of signs used by an enterprise to distinguish its goods and services from those of other enterprises, owned by an association whose members use CTs to identify themselves with a level of quality and other requirements set by the association (WIPO 2008, p. 9) and without any required link to the geographical territory.[3] Associations of SMEs may, for example, register CTs in order to jointly market the products of a group of SMEs and enhance product recognition, and the trademark must be indicative of the unique nature of the goods or services. Consumers must be able to distinguish between various goods and services solely on the basis of the mark.

All types of IP – individual and collective – have an important information function, since they signal and certify high quality standards. They allow consumers to economize on search costs (Posner 2003) and protect them from fraud.[4]

An organizational function is moreover associated with collective IP, because of the introduction of rules, standards, inspection procedures and financial mechanisms for business development into an area, a community or an association of producers.

Both of these functions are crucial to facilitate the development of culture-based, place-bound, idiosyncratic products and their territories, in particular (but not necessarily) when a cultural district has to be structured (Cuccia and Santagata 2004; Santagata 2006). As with the conservation of tangible assets, collective IP can be seen as an instrument to "preserve" cultural processes and boost their value for the community in a context characterized by globalized production, loosening connections between local and global, free and mobile knowledge. Through the introduction of collective IP, creativity is anchored and furthered in the location, providing incentives for cooperation between different actors, both within the creative sector and outside it. For these reasons, the attribution of collective control over intangible assets as culturally-defined goods and services is proposed as an essential instrument. An effective sustainable destination development can be then achieved, as invoked by Gnoth (2007), who highlighted the importance for the success of destination development to link the performance of the brand to its destination's capital.

In particular, we claim that the introduction of collective IP promises to lead to a more sustainable model of tourism development than alternative developments based on individual property rights on "hard" infrastructure and land, at least as far as cultural tourism destinations are involved. However, the valorization of local creative knowledge needs to take shape within a "networked" structure of the local production environment, including the full range of visitor services (accommodation, catering, interpretation and so on). Any effort to base local tourism development on creativity and cultural production cannot neglect the composite nature of the tourist product – visitor services not connected operationally with primary cultural attractions are generally offered in markets with very different structures of interests and stakeholdership (Dahles 2000; Orbasli 2001).

Indeed, a number of well-known practical examples could be quoted in which things have gone wrong and the industrial production of tourism services (including primary attractions such as museums) has taxed creative or identitarian stances: from made-in-Asia "art" glass items sold in Murano showrooms, which are cheap enough to outsell the export designer pieces on the hurried (badly informed) Venetian tourist market (Russo and Segre 2005), to the "McGuggenheims" (Richards and Wilson 2006; McNeill 2000) echoing Ritzer's (1998) critique of the standardization of tourism consumption landscapes. In addition, the imaging of places by intermediaries critically reduce the opportunities for trusting host–guest interaction, as a counterfeit, conservative landscape is eventually produced (Delgado 2004), negating social dynamism. Hence, in Venice, the tourists' "romantic" is – for its citizens – the "silent", the "dead", and the dearth of opportunities for social and economic growth (Davis and Marvin 2004; Quinn 2007). In a similar way, the expropriation of elements of the tourist product (hotels, travel, restaurants, events) from local ownership or control is likely to bring about a rupture in the process of integration and delivery of cultural products, with global functions developing independently and sometimes at different quality levels from the local ones.

## THE ENFORCEMENT OF COLLECTIVE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY: TOWARD "AREA LABELS" AS A HIERARCHICAL BRAND SYSTEM

Because of their organizational function, individual private trademarks and collective trademarks affect the strategic behaviors of producers in two different directions. The institution of collective property rights favors cooperative strategies among producers, since their interests coincide and converge in the direction of promoting the common trademark. The success of collective trademarks may eventually result in the attraction of a wider audience. Firms would then compete, by means of a distinctive sign, represented by the arbitrary name of the private mark, for their exclusive market shares.

Collective trademarks have no particular relationship with the "geographic origin" of the products, or the inputs used, as is the case with GI, since they regulate the "membership" to a group of producers that is characterized – with public recognition – by offering high levels of quality. This may encourage the introduction of different collective IP protection, not in an exclusive way (that is, only a GI *or* a CT), but in a "cascading" system, combining in this way the information function with the organizational function of collective intellectual property. Moreover, collective trademarks may be used alongside the individual mark of the producer of a given good. This allows companies to differentiate their own products from those of competitors, while at the same time benefiting from the confidence of the consumers in products or services offered under the collective mark (Rojal 2005).

In addition to the usual IP protection through GI and AO for goods, collective IP should be applied to the points of sale of different goods sharing a given cultural background, and to every local suppliers of services committed to a given "place philosophy". In particular, three fields of application of collective IP can be proposed:

1. Collective IP on a *production process*. This indicates the genuineness of a production process based on embedded local knowledge; for example,

*Appellation d'origine contrôlée* (AOC) for Champagne wine, or *Denominazione di origine controllata e garantita* (DOCG) for Barolo wine,[5] and "Vetro Artistico Murano" for artistic glass produced in Murano. Particular products are indeed frequently protected by such kinds of collective property rights, often referring to a geographical context (in that case, a GI or AO); alternatively (in the case of a CT) they guarantee the original quality of goods defined through a cultural brand.

2. Collective IP on a *point of sale*. This is a label put on marketplace agents, signaling that a given establishment offers – exclusively or not – the original products, and in general that it also commits to the respect and furthering of a given cultural environment. This application of IP may or may not coincide with the previous one; the distribution process often implies a divergence of the concept. For example, the shops in the old Dutch city of Delft that are entitled to sell original "Delfts Blauwe" porcelain pieces are clearly distinguished from souvenir outlets selling reproductions, through a label placed on their display windows. Another example is the "Vetro Artistico Murano" glass, sold in shops displaying a particular sticker testifying their authorization to clearly and unambiguously display products with the collective mark.
3. Collective IP on an *image* or *brand*. This defines the association of a supplier with a geographically delimited area that has cultural significance, rather than referring to a specific quality of a product itself. Area labels can also be loosely connected to physical places. The rationale is to offer to all commercial stakeholders in a given area some identification with the place brand, if they commit to some kind of "place philosophy". This may refer to a style, protecting the area from loss of identity when the original identifiers wane (as in the case of the Carnaby Street, London "punk" shops, for example), or to the high quality or genuineness of the products on sale, as in the case of London's Bond Street's associated business and Vilanova de Gaia Porto wineries in Portugal, where the visual and symbolic landscape – valuable in itself – is defended against the changes that might follow from the "flashy" price-based competition of mass tourism development in surrounding areas. Collective IP can also be applied to an image identifying a "commercial philosophy" not linked at all to a geographically delimited area, as in the case of the Romantik Hotel or Relais and Chateaux chains.

In any case, collective IP rights are normally managed by sector associations or public administrations responsible for the region of validity of the mark. If a member does not respect the rules of engagement; that is, if s/he produces something that does not have any relationship to the intangibles characterizing the cultural brand that defines the group, s/he loses the right to use the trademark. This aspect enforces the organization function of the IP right, implying cooperative behavior among members.

Our main claim is that collective IP should not necessarily be related to a specific product, as it is usually the case, especially in the second and third cases listed above. In fact, a fundamental distinction is introduced regarding the "spatial emphasis" given to collective IP, between the territory of reference for the regulation of culture-based production processes (which is the base of GI and AO, guaranteeing that the inputs and knowledge employed in some protected culture-based production are indeed "local") and areas of application of collective IP, which instead refer to the marketplace in which the trademark is applied.[6] For example, labeled products with GI or AO can only be sold in establishments that have the right to do so as a result of the CT regulation, and this may coincide with a specific and delimited location, contributing to raising its profile as a high-quality tourist area.

While solving the asymmetric information problem that usually affects tourists, a strict regulation for the protection of IP in the field of production process only through GI and AO linked to a territory may have the adverse effect of stifling innovation and making products unresponsive to market changes (Segre 2003; Cuccia and Santagata 2004). Moreover, it could be of little use when regulating a multisectoral industry such as tourism. In the latter case, the area of validity of collective IP is bounded in such a way as to highlight the "added value" of a specific location, differentiating it from other areas that may have similar characteristics but not the same historical or identitarian value. The protected mark could be seen as a compensation for firms operating in areas that are subject to higher costs or a higher level of regulation, or more prosaically, as a covert means to defend the incumbents' rents in an area. A well-known example of collective IP over a restricted area is offered by the denomination of World Heritage Site, which implies that, in an area thus designated, strict conservation rules are in place, protecting its historical and functional originality and hindering commercial developments that might dilute such integrity.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we addressed branding strategies based on an articulated use of the collective intellectual property rights as a mean of producing sustainable place development in the context of places as tourist destinations. These are typically affected by the tensions of local development as shaped by global flows, which have the power to produce irremediable changes in the local social and productive environment.

In this context, we argue that regulation of private property alone will not have any significant effects on the sustainable development of the destination. Instead, we shifted the focus of tourism policy on collective property on to intangible creative local knowledge as the glue of this construction, and the protection of collective intellectual property as the strategy that enables this. In this light, we have proposed that brands should be based on intellectual property and their application to production processes, points of sale or tourist areas could together achieve cooperative behavior within a competition model that gains from cooperation and trust both within the sector and in its relationships with customers.

## NOTES

1. A broad introduction to IP is available in the WIPO publication *WIPO Intellectual Property Handbook: Policy, Law and Use* (see www.wipo.int/about-ip/en/iprm/index.htm).
2. Copyright describes a bundle of rights given to creators in relation to their literary works – such as novels, poems and plays, films and musical compositions, and artistic works – such as paintings, drawings, sculptures, photographs, architecture, instruction manuals, software, databases, technical documentation, advertisements and maps. Copyright is not considered in this chapter.
3. Note that a CT is different from a certification mark, which is given to signal compliance with defined standards, but is not confined to any membership, as CT is. A certification mark may be granted to anyone who can certify that the products involved meet certain established standards. The internationally accepted "ISO 9000" quality standards are an example of such widely recognized certifications.
4. The owner of physical property has much greater control over it than the owner of intellectual output could ever have in the absence of the legal system of IP. A physical object is stolen only if its possession changes hands, whereas IP is deemed by law to be "stolen" if, without the permission of its creator or owner, it is copied, imitated, adapted, translated or displayed.
5. The two examples are equivalent to the EU law on Protected Designation of Origin, which also protects the names of cheeses, hams, sausages, olives, beers, Balsamic vinegar and even regional breads, fruits and vegetables.
6. Our analysis it is not applicable to the wide-ranging literature about the problem of the definition of the "country of origin" collective trademark, since we refer to limited areas, where the qualifying element is clearly a culture-based, idiosyncratic and place-bound product or activity.

## CHAPTER 15

# Website Analysis: Brand Africa

*Jeroen van Wijk, Frank M. Go & Robert Govers**

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism represents a promising service sector that could significantly support the development of African economies. African governments targeting foreign tourists are firmly supported by international organizations. The United Nations, for example, has identified the tourist sector as a means in the "war on poverty" and will contribute towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 (UNWTO 2005). A major barrier, however, is Africa's troublesome image. Africa has in fact two dominant images in the outside world. In the western mass media, the continent is overwhelmingly associated with corruption, violent conflicts, hunger and disease. These media glimpses led *The Economist* (13–19 May 2000) to conclude that Africa is a "hopeless continent".

In stark contrast to this aspect, however, Africa's tourism image conjures up views of wide open spaces, nature and wildlife, ready to be discovered by the adventurous tourist wishing to visit the past. Advertisements by Western tour operators generally depict Africa as a continent where Westerners can rediscover their "pre-industrial self" (Cornelissen 2005). This act of stereotyping directs attention away from the specific, present realties of African societies. Stereotypes are structures containing the beliefs, knowledge and evaluation of members of a group or nation. Accordingly, stereotyping influences the way that new information is processed and its subsequent recall of stereotypical images of places and people. In turn, stereotypical images can be given either positive or negative slants (Niemann and Secord 1995). Western travel brochures typically portray black, colored or Indian South Africans basically as heritage products (Cornelissen 2005), thus perpetuating national stereotypes. Even South Africa, the economic powerhouse of the continent has been unable to shake its pre-industrial stereotypical image. Consequently, the dominant image of Africa, as perceived by the majority of foreigners, is increasingly challenged on the grounds that it would not

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reflect Africa's dynamic diversity in terms of economic growth, political stability and optimism.

Various forums such as the 2006 World Economic Forum on Africa in Cape Town; the International Media Summit 2006 in Ghana, and Francis (2007) have tackled the question of how to "re-brand" Africa. With respect to tourism development, Africa's re-branding strategies raise two issues. The first is about structure, and concerns the opportunities for African tourism suppliers to brand their destinations in the main international markets, considering their marginal position as players in the global tourism chain. Moreover, destination management organizations (DMOs) rely heavily on the internet for information exchange and computerized reservation systems. Since most African countries have limited connections to global information and communication technology (ICT) networks, domestic African tourism service suppliers must be inventive to cope with, or circumvent, the inequality in the information society; this is commonly referred to as the "digital divide" (van Dijk 2005).

The second issue is concerned with content – that is, the contribution by African tourism service suppliers to sustaining the foreign stereotypical image of the African continent. In his paper presented at the Africa International Media Summit in Ghana Mawugbe (2006) reported on a study that investigated the sources of African news published in two state-owned newspapers in Ghana in 2005. The analysis revealed that 85 percent of the articles on Africa were sourced from the BBC's News Agency, and only 15 percent were based on information gathered by Ghanaian reporters working for the Ghana News Agency. The author's conclusion that the re-branding process should start from Africa itself is also relevant to African tourism destinations. It raises two issues of importance – namely, whether there are African organizations that may "own the lenses" and are needed to give rise to the domestically-induced formation of destination branding; and to what extent the image that is projected to the outside world differs from the foreign stereotypes.

The internet has become *the* medium for innovation in tourism marketing. In principle it also offers a promising space for relatively marginal industry players in the global tourism value chain to reduce their dependency on the main international tour operators. This opportunity raises a central question, namely: how might African suppliers leverage global virtual networks to expand their presence through high value-added branding and marketing activities?

The relevance of this chapter is twofold. First, it contributes to the knowledge of how African service suppliers at present brand their tourism destinations in the international market. In particular, its focus is on both the structure and the content of the tourism websites of three poor, emerging tourism countries in Sub-Saharan Africa: Rwanda, Uganda and Mozambique. Second, the chapter contributes to the dearth of literature on the role of the internet as an innovative image formation agent (Choi *et al.* 2007, p. 118). Following on from the central question, the chapter is largely organized around the following three subquestions: (i) What are the opportunities for indigenous tourism service suppliers in the African countries to innovate and project their own image of tourism destinations in the international markets through the internet; (ii) which organizations can be considered to be the "movers and shakers" of tourism branding in these countries; and (iii) what dominant national destination image, if any, do these organizations currently project?

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the organized tourism context, African tourism service firms have previously depended on multinational corporations in the global tourism value chain, typically an international tour operator, to persuade Western markets of the attractiveness of African destination images. At present, the internet has turned the traditional distribution channel on its head. This has created opportunities for innovation, but only with access to the specific capabilities of hotels and airlines, and applying this to their own marketing skills. Significant product and process upgrading is required to make African tourism destinations more attractive to a wider public. African destinations hold a marginal competitive position in the international tourism market, which is reflected in the relatively small number of visitors: only 3 percent of international travellers visit Sub-Saharan Africa (UNWTO 2007). Inter-chain upgrading – that is, diversification into alternative tourism value chains, is potentially promising. A wave of affluent middle-class tourists will be emerging in China, Brazil, Russia and India over the next 10–15 years (Future Foundation 2005, p. 15), and African destinations could cater to these new markets.

In view of African image formation, the most relevant category of upgrading appears to be functional upgrading. The source of power in most global value chains lies increasingly in the branding, marketing, product development and coordination of inter-firm relations. As a result of the poor overall image of the continent, and the high level of investment that is required to join the global reservation systems, African tourism service suppliers largely depend on trusted international tour operators for their sales. This dependency has two consequences for African suppliers: (i) they play an insignificant role in the high-value-added functions of destination marketing and branding in the main tourism markets, because these nodes in the value chain are looked after by multinational lead companies; and (ii) they can only play a very limited role in the formation of the projected image of African destinations, which, again, is covered by the lead firms in the value chain.

The dependency position in which African tourism service suppliers find themselves creates little, if any, domestic wealth, and therefore renders an exploration of opportunities for functional upgrading particularly relevant. At least three strategies for innovation may be applied:

1. *Enhancing reputation*. Because travelers move along the value chain to consume services with individual suppliers, these suppliers are offered a unique opportunity to build and enhance their reputation directly with the end consumers.
2. *Shortening the value chain*. Individual tourism service suppliers could use the internet for direct marketing (and sales) to consumers in foreign markets, targeting "self catering" or "co-creating" travelers. This market segment consists of visitors who do not require holiday packaging of trusted outbound tour operators, but use the internet to build their trip for themselves.
3. *Place branding*. Associations of individual African tourism service suppliers, supported by governmental bodies, could promote a specific country, region or city as a tourism destination. A competitive asset of African destinations is the geographic authenticity that is relevant in view of "origin-based trust" (Gibbon and Ponte 2005: 184) in an African experience. The use of geographic indications reduces the mental distance between suppliers and consumers, enables the former to engage in B2C marketing, and may make legal protection of the geographical trade name a wise option. Independent international branding of the destination could enhance interest from foreign consumers and provoke a higher demand for African destinations among tour operators.

However, functional upgrading into branding and marketing is a challenging process. In particular, it requires local tourism stakeholders in the African destination context to collaborate and develop, jointly, a distinct and competitive image, and to coordinate capabilities to represent the attainments of a tourism destination in a manner that bridges the gaps between the perceptions and expectations of the destination's services, and between local tourism entrepreneurs on the one hand and visitors on the other, resulting in a return on investment.

Govers and Go (2009) argue that successful place branding requires the bridging of three gaps. First, the strategy gap – that is, the projected place image (sponsored and mediated marketing communications) and product offering that must be aligned with the place identity. If they are not, the place brand is at risk of being viewed as spin and marketing gibberish. Second, a place brand satisfaction gap, building realistic market expectations – promises that *can* be delivered. This is being complicated by the fact that perceived images are significantly impacted by media reporting, word of mouth and mouse (Web 2.0), as well as the cultural, social and individual background of the receiver. Third, the place brand performance gap, which required the promised place experience to be delivered, and in this sense actions speak louder than words.

Content analysis of narrative representations of African destinations on the internet can therefore provide a useful insight into how the continent is presented and projected through global value chains and business networks. Investigating what is projected by various actors in the industry would give us an insight into what part of the image of the world that they have, or they want to "appropriate" (Sontag 2002, p. 4). Taking this into account, different actors in the tourism industry, public agencies versus private sector-specific companies, are hypothesized to have different objectives in terms of projecting a destination image that will favorably affect their intended positioning and ultimately their customers' buying behavior. Based on Gnoth (2002) and Govers and Go (2005), it can be assumed that induced images vary among different actors. In a globalizing world, tourism emerges as "an ideological framing of history, nature and tradition with the power to reshape culture and nature to its own needs" (MacCannell 1992). In turn, in the value chain context, the issue may be, to paraphrase Long (1997), "how actors struggle to give meaning to their experiences through an array of representations, images, cognitive understandings, and emotional responses".

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for the African tourism website research comprised a website search and content analysis of website texts.

### Website Search

Tourism websites were collected from three African countries: Rwanda, Uganda and Mozambique. All these countries are classified as low income countries (with a per capita gross national income of US$825 or less) (World Bank 2005), where tourism could potentially have a high impact on economic development. The three countries are emerging tourism markets. Together, they attracted around 5 percent (1 million) of the total of 22 million international visitors to Sub-Saharan Africa in 2004 (UNWTO 2008; Verdugo *et al.* 2008).

The website search focused on English-language websites, and took place initially via the Google search engine, using search terms such as “Tourism [country]”, “[country] Travel”, “Gorilla Uganda”, “Diving Mozambique” and so on. The tourism portals that were discovered offered links to additional tourism enterprises. Hard copy travel guides, such as those produced by Lonely Planet, were used to trace more tourism suppliers, which were then checked for an online presence. Finally, we relied on personal experiences and networks to collect tourism service suppliers that might have been missed. As later “control searches” revealed no new relevant websites, we assume that our data set is nearing the entire population of tourism websites relevant to the three countries that were operational in 2006.

The search focused on three categories of websites:

1. Tourism portals, which we define as online information gateways offering links to local intermediary and primary tourism service suppliers. The portals may either be specialized in tourism or general interest portals with links to tourism websites. Two selection criteria were used: portals should be focused totally on one of the three countries, and should be free of commercial interest other than of marketing the countries as tourism destinations.
2. Intermediary organizations, which include mainly online booking agents and tour operators with a clear local linkage (see below).
3. Primary tourism service suppliers, a category that covers all types of accommodations, safari tours, diving schools, museums, community-based tourism projects, transport and so on.

For both the intermediaries and primary suppliers, the following selection criteria applied. The website (i) should represent a domestic tourism enterprise; (ii) should indicate that the owner of the enterprise is in control of the website content; (iii) may either have an exclusive domain name or has at least one full web page dedicated to the firm; and (iv) should include contact details that enable customers to make direct contact with the enterprise.

The dataset includes a total of 449 websites (see Table 15.1). Ownership and server location of the websites was determined by using “whois” queries on the website DomainTools.com. Websites with a top-level domain name (TLD), such as “.com”, would give a variety of information, including

**TABLE 15.1 Dataset of tourism websites in three African countries**

| | Rwanda | | Uganda | | Mozambique | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Dataset** | **Content analysis** | **Dataset** | **Content analysis** | **Dataset** | **Content analysis** |
| Primary suppliers | 28 | 12 | 172 | 138 | 141 | 116 |
| Intermediaries | 16 | 15 | 66 | 57 | 6 | 5 |
| Portals | 6 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| Total | **50** | 29 | **245** | 202 | **154** | 127 |

the registrant or owner of the domain name, the registrant's real address, as well as the country of the server that hosts the website. For websites with a country code top-level domain (ccTLD) – for example, ".rw", information was collected from national registration sites. Those African websites that lacked their own domain name were categorized under the registry information of their host domain.

## Content Analyses

In order to identify the most frequently used words in the website content, automated content analysis was employed, using the software package CATPAC. CATPAC will work with any and all words in the text; produce a frequency table and then perform the neural network analysis on the top-X most frequently found words (the latter functionality was not used for the analysis presented in this chapter). X (that is, the maximum number of words to be included in the analysis) is defined by the researcher. However, words incorporated in an exclude file are ignored. A default exclude file containing words such as articles, prepositions and other "meaningless" words is provided with CATPAC, but the researcher can incorporate additional words in the exclude file (Woelfel and Stoyanoff 1993). Among others, Gretzel and Fesenmaier (2003) and Ryan (2000) recommend the use of CATPAC in tourism-related content analysis research.

Because a substantial number of websites lacked textual content, only 358 websites were used for content analysis. Text was collected from every website at three levels of website pages: the home page, the internal pages that were accessible from the home page, and the internal pages that were accessible from the second-level pages. The texts were merged into three country files. In each file, synonyms were merged – for example, "dive" and "diving" became two instances of the word "diving". Eventually, we produced for each country a list of sixty words that appeared most frequently on the tourism websites. These words were then listed under seven category headings that are commonly used in the tourism literature to characterize tourism destinations (see Echtner 2002; Gnoth 2002).

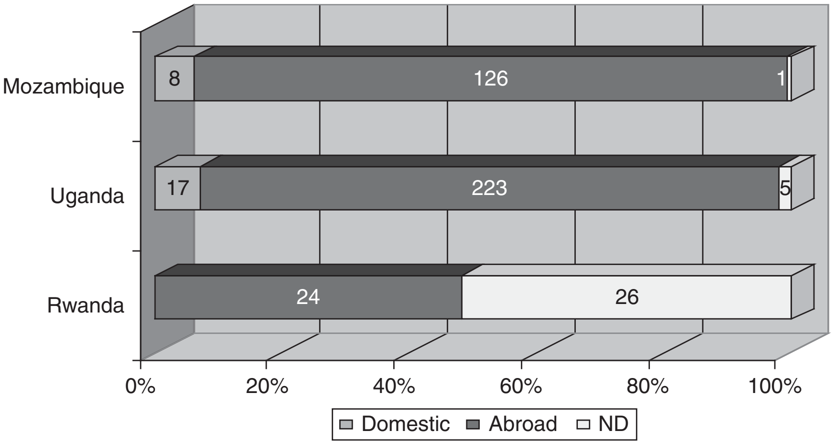
## RESULTS: TOURISM WEBSITES STRUCTURE AND PROJECTED DESTINATION IMAGE

Table 15.1 provides an overview of the magnitude of websites that project Rwanda, Uganda and Mozambique as tourism destinations on the internet. Rwanda has the smallest representation on the internet; and Uganda the largest of the three. The vast majority of the tourism websites represent primary tourism service suppliers, apart from Rwanda, where these account for slightly over half of the total number of websites. Accommodation in Rwanda seems very much under-represented online: of the seventy-two hotels and other accommodation that could be traced, only twelve have a website.

### Online Tourism Representation

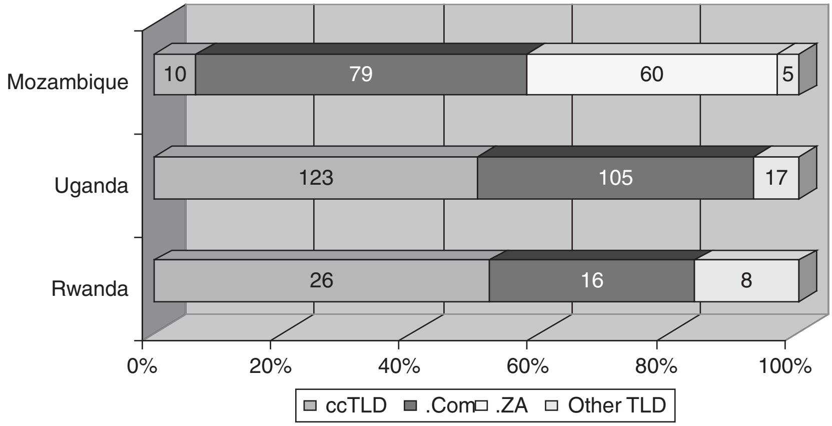
Figure 15.1 indicates that the vast majority of tourism service suppliers use foreign server companies in a technologically advanced country to host its website. Most of the servers used are located in the USA, Europe or South

**FIGURE 15.1** **Server location of tourism websites of three African countries**



*Note:* Analysis of Mozambique is based on only 135 service suppliers.

**FIGURE 15.2** **Domain names of tourism websites of three African countries**



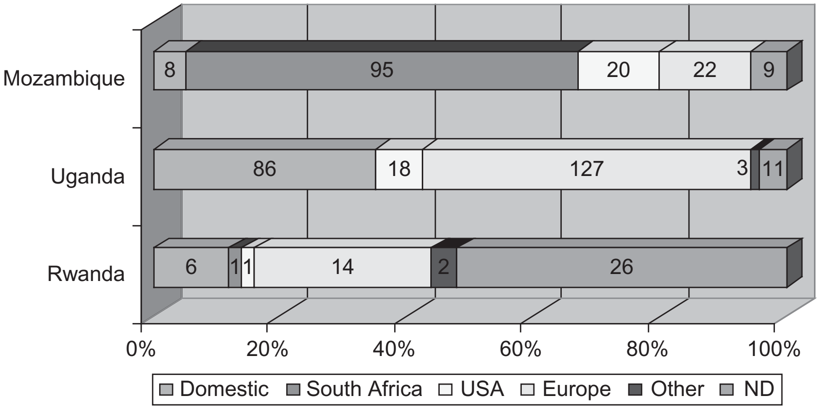
Africa. Only a very small proportion of websites in Uganda and Mozambique is hosted by domestic servers. An obvious reason for this finding could be that, in this way African online firms cope with the limited ICT infrastructure, the regular power blackouts, and a population that has limited computer skills.

A similar strategy is found with respect to the administrative dimension of the ICT infrastructure. Availability of internet service providers, price differences between top level domain (TLD) extensions, or long procedures may influence firms in their choice of a domain name. For this reason, generic TLDs may sometimes be preferred over country code TLDs (ccTLD). On the other hand, ccTLDs may have some emotional appeal and may contribute to the overall image projection of the country, although they might prove to be more difficult to find on the internet as consumers are potentially less familiar with these country codes. Figure 2 shows that half of the online tourism firms in Uganda and Rwanda use their own ccTLD. The other half resorts mainly to the dot-com TLD. Mozambican tourism service suppliers hardly use the ccTLD. Around half of them use the dot-com TLD, where the remaining firms can be found with the ".za" extension, which basically reflects the high number of South African tourism entrepreneurs that invest in Mozambique.

## Tourism Website Networks

Tourism websites can be divided into two categories: suppliers of tourism services, such as accommodation, gorilla tracking or scuba diving; and

**FIGURE 15.3 ▌Domicile of tourism website owners in three African countries (number and percentage of total number of websites in the sample)**



*Note:* Calculations based on the domicile of the website registrant.

intermediaries, such as local tour operators and booking agents, and portals. Tourism portals tend to be viewed as the most powerful websites, because they serve as information hubs in website networks, thereby influencing many users. Portals guide potential customers via hyperlinks to both intermediaries and primary suppliers. The information provided on the portal as well as processed on the websites linked to the portal, in combination, contribute importantly to exerting an influence on the formation of a projected image of a particular country as a tourism destination. There are six portals for Rwanda (a mix of local and foreign-owned portals), seven for Mozambique (all owned by foreign organizations) and seven for Uganda (mainly owned by Ugandan organizations apart from the largest portal, which is foreign-owned).

Figure 15.3 indicates that ownership of the vast majority of tourism websites in and representing the three African countries rests with foreign entrepreneurs or "boardrooms" (based on the domicile of the website registrants). Domestic ownership of tourism websites in Mozambique and Rwanda is limited to only a few percent, but increases to around 35 percent in the Ugandan context. Currently, over 60 percent of Mozambican tourism websites are owned by individuals and organizations based in South Africa, while more than half of the Ugandan websites are owned by Europeans, mainly the owner of the Travel Uganda portal. Europeans also seem to play a disproportionate role in website ownership in Rwanda, though for over half of the websites the researchers were unable to trace the data relating to registrants because it was unavailable.

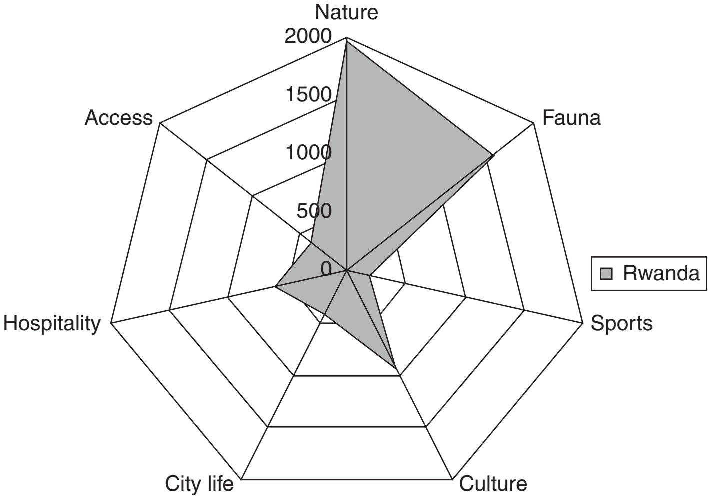
The information about the tourism internet portal networks and about the domicile of the website owners seem to confirm that the virtual "real estate" of online tourism in the three African countries tends to be foreign-owned. In Mozambique, this situation basically reflects the high interest in Mozambique as a tourist site among South African tourism investors involved with the South African tourist market. In Uganda, the foreign involvement can largely be explained by one foreign web-hosting firm that offers local tourism service suppliers the opportunity to have online exposure, and this firm dominates the national market. As a result, the "lenses" of image formation of three African national destinations seem to be substantially owned by foreign stakeholders.

## Projected Destination Image

To reveal the destination image projected by the tourism websites in the three African countries that are subject of the present study, a content analysis was carried out on the total sample of websites per country. The aggregate result of the study is shown in the three radar charts (see Figures 15.4–15.6). The charts show a number of interesting findings:

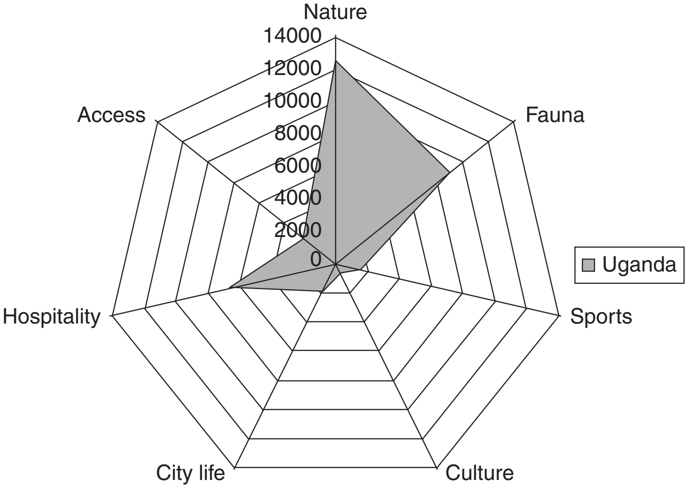
1. All three countries project, in particular, "nature" as the key attraction of the country. The category "nature" is built on words such as "forest", "volcano", "park", "lake", "falls" and "ocean".
2. Both Rwanda and Uganda also strongly include "fauna" in their projected image. This category basically refers to "gorillas" and "chimpanzees", colonies of which can be found in both countries, as well as to words such as "safari", "game" and "bird". In Mozambique, "fauna" seems to be a less important attribute in the image projection, even though the country hosts rare wildlife (both terrestrial and marine). Perhaps this low emphasis on wildlife can be explained by South African dominance in Mozambique's online tourism networks. Wildlife is amply available in South Africa itself, and South African tourists are particularly interested in the Mozambican coastline.
3. In the Mozambican projection, the category "sports" is relatively visible. It consists mainly of the words "dive", "scuba" and "boat", and reflects the many diving opportunities on the Mozambican coast, whereas in Rwanda and Uganda sporting opportunities are undeveloped.

**FIGURE 15.4** **Projected image of Rwanda as a tourism destination**



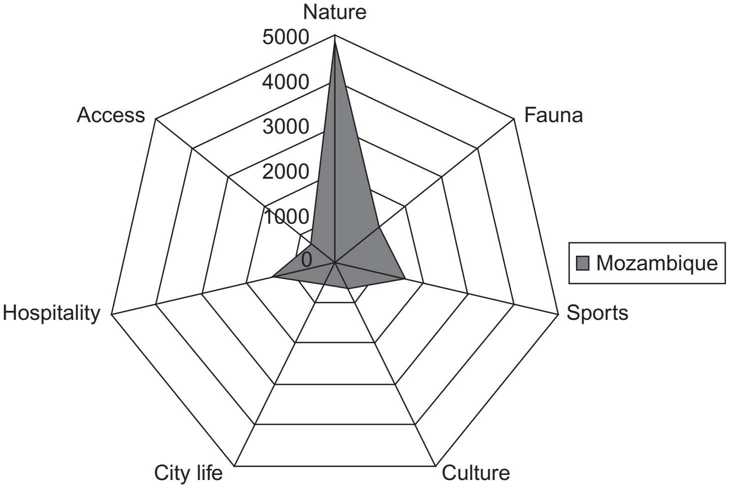
*Source*: Content analysis of 29 tourism websites of Rwanda.

**FIGURE 15.5** **Projected image of Uganda as a tourism destination**



*Source*: Content analysis of 202 tourism websites of Uganda.

**FIGURE 15.6** **Projected image of Mozambique as a tourism destination**



*Source*: Content analysis of 127 tourism websites of Mozambique.

4. The category "hospitality" ("hotel", "lodge", "resort", "bar", "campsite") seems well represented in the projected image of all three countries. In contrast, "access" ("road", "drive", "tour") and "city life" (including mainly the names of the largest cities in the countries) are categories that seem to be less relevant in the projected images. Neither does "culture" (based on words such as "museum", "local", "tradition", "genocide") seem particularly important in the projected images of Mozambique and Uganda. In Rwanda, culture has more prominence. However, this result might be biased by the well-developed museum portal that is having a relatively large influence on the small sample of Rwandan websites.

## CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter focused on the issue of how African suppliers could leverage innovation in global virtual networks to expand their presence in the high-value-added activities of branding and marketing. With respect to the structural dimension, we found a high reliance among indigenous suppliers on foreign server networks, general top level domains, foreign web hosting services, and foreign tourism investors. On the one hand, this reflects the competitive innovation vulnerability of local African tourism firms that have to cope with the digital divide. Access to advanced ICT networks and better skills to manage computer software may put foreign tourism entrepreneurs, who are active in African destinations, in a relatively advantageous position for functional upgrading in the tourism global value chain. In this way, the "lenses" that make destination images visible to the international markets are largely foreign-owned, a situation that carries the risk of reinforcing stereotypical images of Africa. On the other hand, resorting to effective foreign web-hosting organizations, while maintaining control over the website content, may reduce such as risk. Hiring foreign organizations seems a pragmatic strategy for indigenous tourism firms to innovate and circumvent the limitations of the present domestic ICT infrastructure.

With respect to the content dimension of the tourism websites, the main findings suggest that the projected images bridge the place branding gaps, albeit only weakly. First, with regard to the ***strategy gap*** there is a risk that the projected image is not structurally linked to the identity of those places where the services of foreign ICT providers are hired. In line with international perceptions, the focus of the websites is primarily on nature and fauna, and their cultural and heritage attributes are largely ignored, or worse, presented in a negative light. Second, those who make the service delivery promise (foreign ICT providers and travel trade) tend to differ from the firms that deliver the service, and therefore may contribute to widening the ***performance gap***. Furthermore, it may trigger considerable discrepancies between tourist expectations and experiences, thus harming a destination's reputation. Third, with respect to the ***satisfaction gap***, the projected image on the websites upholds international hegemonic media perceptions. None of the African tourism websites that were investigated appear to undertake any initiatives either to alter or to contradict stereotypical images to improve the image of Africa's culture, people, and economic and political situation. A possible explanation for this finding could be that the indigenous tourism suppliers themselves hold a stereotypical image of what foreign tourists would like to see. Thus they might ignore a growing segment of tourists who are in search of "local content" that enhances their holiday experience, and who are sensitive to the costs and benefits that tourism bestows on local communities. Catering to this demand in low cultural contexts requires tourism service suppliers to differentiate their products much more. For example, value could be added to ordinary hospitality issues (room, bed) when linked to local customs in order to create an African experience. Adding local content in respect of high culture contexts involves the provision of online information about, and references to, for example, national novelists, musicians, artists, architects and fashion designers. Currently, the tourism websites are almost completely silent on the cultural attributes of their destinations. Hence the limited available information (focusing solely on nature) that Western consumers can obtain from African tourism websites may be seen as a gap so wide and ill-equipped to be perceived as adding value. Consequently, consumers are likely to mix and match their demands specifications through other autonomous information sources.

Functional upgrading in the global value chain of tourism requires African tourist destinations to identify their true position in the market through the systematic and critical analysis of the image they project to an international audience. Such an exercise should give destination management organizations appropriate insights in their strategic degrees of freedom to focus their efforts on one of the three aforementioned destination strategies (or a combination of these), namely:

1. Enhancing reputation directly with end consumers.
2. Shortening the value chain through "direct selling", thus bypassing established intermediaries.
3. Place branding, which leverages the power of network associations to promote a specific African country, region or city as a tourism destination.

No single tourism destination can afford to stand alone, because each is locked into a complex global value chain network of relationships. Therefore, to be effective, the destination management organizations (DMOs) of Rwanda and Uganda could contemplate how to achieve a collaborative advantage. Our research results indicate that in both countries the gorillas are seen as their main feature. Therefore, the gorilla may be interpreted as a "crown jewel" and anchor for the fostering of the tourism image formation process. Within the framework of the tourism value chain network of relationships, the gorilla as a symbol would serve the function of "network picture" around which to mobilize relevant actors to develop a jointly-supported place brand identity, which incorporates relevant local cultural–natural characteristics. The gorillas' habitat is a sufficiently distinctive symbolic feature to differentiate (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000) Rwanda and Uganda as tourism destinations from competing locations and persuade tourists to visit them instead of other destinations.

Against the backdrop of branding within a network approach, it is essential that the DMOs constantly assess their strategic opportunities along two main strands. First, they need to identify strategies that enable DMOs to bridge the digital divide, including the support of foreign servers and foreign web hosting organizations. However, second, the reliance on foreign organizations is likely to lead to new dependencies in the functional upgrading strategies of place branding and marketing. Consequently, DMOs must be vigilant and monitor constantly their business relationships within the tourism value chain and the local networks of suppliers (for example, hoteliers), customers and other business partners (such as airlines) on four brand levels: the brand as a product; the brand as a symbol; the brand as an organization; and the brand as a personality. Modern tourists want to experience "a sense of place" when visiting a destination. Hence, experiential and symbolic benefits play as important a role as functional benefits in a destination brand's identity. For the purpose of bringing a sense of harmony to the "network picture", Rwandan, Ugandan and Mozambican-based DMOs could develop the capability to deal with the effects of the dynamic place branding process and its ensuing triadic tensions between place identity, its projection and the consumers' perceived image.

## NOTE

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## CHAPTER 16

# Orchestrating the Innovation Process of Place Branding

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## INTRODUCTION

Within a networked world, locations, including nations, regions, cities, towns, increasingly apply place branding to compete with each other to win business from the world's major corporations, investors, residents and tourists. But the dynamics of the network factor imply that, to remain competitive, place branding practice needs to apply innovative governance, for the attainment of balanced relationships among the various enterprises and organizations on the one hand, and consumers as equally important participants on the other. To achieve a competitive advantage, place branding can learn much from the networked world of corporations. Researchers (for example, Trueman *et al*. 2004; Kavaratzis 2004; Rainisto 2003) have pointed out significant similarities between place branding and corporate branding. Some descriptions of corporate branding have features close to those of place branding; for example, Knox and Bickerton (2003, p. 1013) state: "a corporate brand is the visual, verbal and behavioural expression of an organisation's unique business model". Strategic and relational elements are often building blocks for corporate brand building and success. Similarly, these are essential elements for collectively generating a unique set of associations, or place branding, in the public mind (Aaker 1996). Thus the approach practiced in corporate branding can, to some extent, also be replicated for place branding, even though there are large differences such as in terms of complexity, the involvement of many different stakeholders, limited management control, and the heterogeneity and experiential nature of the "product". Similarly, innovative approaches used in enterprise building or renewal can also be extended to place branding.

Analogous with brands in marketing, places also satisfy a number of consumer needs – be they functional, symbolic or emotional (Rainisto 2003).

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These needs, or values, are met by diverse attributes. Often these attributes have positive effects on some values, but negative effects on others. A set of critical attributes, when carefully selected and orchestrated, creates uniqueness for a place.

For this orchestration, different stakeholders have much to add. A generic entrepreneurial model of city governance includes public–private partnership (Hubbard and Hall 1998). In accordance with this model, the association between different stakeholders, or relationships, with a common strategic objective forms the basis of the orchestration.

It is not only the active providers of a brand's functional attributes and symbolic values that constitute the stakeholders of the orchestration, but consumers at the receiving end are also important stakeholders. Trueman *et al.* (2004) advocate the importance of stakeholders when examining a city as a brand using conventional typologies used for corporate branding, wherein functional, relational and strategic elements collectively generate a unique set of associations. This approach involving stakeholders is becoming an essential element of urban branding where public–private participation takes place in an integrated form.

The key to successful branding is the establishment of a relationship between the brand and the consumer (Hankinson and Cowking 1993). A close fit between the consumer's own physical and psychological needs and the brand determines brand success. Consumers' active involvement brings a new dimension in the form of co-creation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004), and in specific cases also customized experience. When a wide choice of attributes is available from a large spatial presence, innumerable combinations could be feasible (Ashworth and Voogd 1990). Each combination could bring its own unique experience, thus placing the consumer in the midst of co-creation.

In the context of these various interconnected issues, the core brand of a place is determined by various stakeholders and their relationships. The issue as to how their interests are aligned becomes decisive to building a successful place brand. When their interests might consist of conflicting features, which is not uncommon in reality, an analysis of the weights of these features and possible compromise on certain features, in a way that is convincing to separate groups of stakeholders, is only the beginning. If various stakeholders are engaged in a dialogue, then openness and compromise would lead to acceptance and commitment, and this would form a foundation on which to develop a continuous and sustainable place brand. This would also provide a firm basis for innovation of the place brand and subsequently its essentially successful implementation.

## INNOVATION OF PLACE BRANDING AND DESTINATION MARKETING

Knowledge of enterprise relationships encompasses stakeholders, particularly private and local government bodies, and their counterparts, local and visiting consumers. Public–private–civil partnerships represent an arena in which entrepreneurship comes into play. This action is directed in particular toward understanding more imaginative and inviting scenarios to support innovative entrepreneurship on the one hand, and to managing innovation geared toward place branding on the other. Such an integrated innovation scenario offers a design to stimulate entrepreneurship and creativity, and contributes to a successful place brand built on the advantages of co-creation, also called co-innovation.

### Service Creation and Service Consumption

Most innovation processes are built on the activities of multidisciplinary teams. In popular terms we can characterize this process with activities such as dreaming, thinking, deciding, or daring and doing. Most activities of the innovation process can thus best be characterized as entrepreneurial. More often than not, entrepreneurs will be involved in these. The start of this entrepreneurial innovation process lies with environmental analysis, furthering this by developing a vision, up to fully developing a product or service and its introduction to a place or destination.

Entrepreneurial innovation for place branding may thus start with opportunity analysis and idea generation. Existing sets of enterprises and their expectations in terms of opportunities, form a source of information. At this end of the spectrum, enterprises are service providers who also create the needed setting for service consumption, while at the other end, various target customer groups will function as service consumers with different perceptions of the services. In view of these considerations, the wide range of diversified groups relevant to innovation can be split conveniently into two levels: service providers and service consumers. Some authors advocate positive gains from this composition: “An experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and products as props, to engage individual consumers in a way that creates a memorable event” (Pine and Gilmore 1998). This would also mean co-creation with the inclusion of customized experience. Thus the inclusion of target groups in the innovation process is likely to increase the scope of improved consumer perception, and even unique experiences.

## Stakeholders, Their Values and Attributes

Though categorized into the two major groups of service providers and service consumers, each group still consists of various stakeholders with diversified interests and expectations, and thus diversified opportunities. Service providers act as key players in creating the brand core. They may be specialists on the primary product, the place brand, or they may be so general that they serve other sectors, such as residents, business, industry or academia. Often they network with each other, sometimes possibly in different tiers. They are thus bound by primary service relationships as defined by Hankinson (2004). Similarly, local or regional public organizations are responsible for the required infrastructure for place brand development or sustainability. Brand infrastructure relationships among them are seen as essential elements, especially for the development of new product and place brand linkages. Consumer relationships as categorized by Hankinson (2004) can be limited to a few stakeholders to enhance the specificity toward a target group that may be a part of either a service providers' or a service consumers' group.

The selection of a target group from among service providers or service consumers is the first step on the path to place brand innovation analysis. The selection may even consist of two groups when the interests of the groups may remain within a single section of stakeholders. Identification of specific "values" for the selected target group would bring a focus to proposed innovations. If the target group consisted of service providers, then any consideration for innovation would mean *brand building*, thus to a great extent entrepreneurial activity. If the target group consisted of public organizations, however, the corresponding innovation would be aimed at contributing to values such as economic and regional improvements. As an alternative, if consumers are the target group, then innovation should address achieving an improved *brand perception*. The consideration of the values of any target group may have to address those issues that belong to both primary and secondary interests. With respect to consumers, the values might diverge from specific heritage or culture-related interests, to knowledge expansion, to comfort, and even to price. Their importance, or ranking for innovation, would also diverge, making this a useful means for further analysis.

To carry out a stakeholder analysis, a small group, also known as a panel, is easier to manage than a large group of stakeholders. The panel should consist of diverse stakeholders, with representatives of both service providers and service consumers. This will guarantee broad representation to address divers issues related to branding. There would also be scope for interaction and dialogue among the panel members. Critical issues related to opportunities and ideas for products and services can then be subjected to in-depth analysis similar to the Delphi technique. In this approach, during the first round of discussions each panel member, who is familiar with major issues typical of his/her own field, will be asked to give his/her views on possible opportunities and to suggest ideas for a new product or service. During this session, in addition to defending his/her proposals, each panel member will be also able to probe the details of others' proposals. This "scoping round" of Delphi technique also functions like a brainstorm session, bringing transparency to various proposals. During subsequent rounds the panel moves toward possible concessions, consolidation and consensus with regard to a specific set of opportunities and ideas. Finally, during the "convergence round" of the Delphi technique, each panellist will be in a position to show commitment. It is this commitment that is so essential, particularly for other stakeholders in the same category.

Alternatively, a set of values of a target group, such as specific consumers, usually links to a specific set of associated properties, also known as "attributes". Within a set of values, each value may have an association with one attribute. However, an attribute may have a relationship with more than one value. Thus there might exist a cross-relationship between each value and each attribute. In any case, each relationship between a value and an attribute is weighted with a ranking that characterizes the importance or significance of the relationship. This ranking is also essential for prioritizing the dimensions of innovation related to place branding.

## Place Brand Innovation Using Rankings

Research in place branding and destination marketing, as in many fields such as strategic and marketing management, addresses various issues and their relevance qualitatively. One rarely finds a strategy and its requirements that might change, with any degree of certainty, the course of a business, or the success of an entrepreneurship. Equally unexplored is the development of a strategy to improve consumer perception, satisfaction or experience.

The ranking of the importance of stakeholder groups, and of their values and attributes, is a means through which an appropriate marketing strategy can be established. The ranking of values and attributes functions as a powerful tool emphasizing the importance of individual attributes, and values, on the way to formulate a business plan. This approach to innovation for enterprises (Janszen *et al.* 2010) is generic in nature and is also open for application to the innovation of place branding and destination marketing.

The analysis of values and their attributes in relation to specific target consumer groups, with the use of ranking and stakeholder involvement, may be seen as a blueprint for innovation. This blueprint also sets a foundation for subsequently deciding on necessary competence, functional or transformational requirements. The requirements might encompass the network of relationships as grouped by Hankinson (2004). These requirements would contribute to establishing a place brand that builds brand personality on functional, symbolic and emotional dimensions (Rainisto 2003; Hankinson 2004). The requirements could be targeted toward the positioning of the place brand as well as toward identifying specific features in which the innovation should match, if not exceed, those of the best in the market.

Some salient features of the approach to innovation, as proposed by Inpaqt BV, include a number of tools and methods that have commonly been employed in engineering and technology for product design. Recently there has been some application of these tools and methods to the design of services and entrepreneurial innovations. One of those tools, "House of Quality", focuses on the values of a target group, which function as weights. These weights are subsequently applied against scores for each separate attribute in relation to an individual value, in this way arriving at a total score for each attribute. The total scores of attributes help to compare, or benchmark, those features in which the brand of one place may score more highly than another, and to what extent. This quantitative comparison is more powerful than a qualitative comparison. It focuses not only on several attributes or directions, but also on the degree of improvement or innovation. Even investment decisions that are directly related to the degree of innovation become easy to make by the relevant stakeholders.

## CASE STUDY: MYSORE CITY – CONNECTING CHALLENGES WITH VALUE-CREATING ACTIVITIES

Mysore, in the southern part of India, embodies unique features that are different from the neighboring Bangalore. A visitor to the latter often arrives on IT related business, while a visitor to Mysore expects unique experiences staged in the setting of a quiet city. In addition to a well-kept palace, many attributes add value to the city branding: a vibrant market place offering an abundance of rural products, wide avenues with old trees filled with colorful seasonal flowers, the traditional laidback lifestyle of the local residents, and a famous annual festival, Dasara. A few smaller palaces converted to hotels add to the commercial value of the city.

Mysore is a heritage city because of the major palace built in the Baroque style and a few minor palaces, Museums and art galleries also display the city's heritage. Mysore is religious, with a number of temples in and around the city; some of these have been nominated as world heritage objects. Mysore is known as the cultural capital of the region. Cultural activities reach their peak in particular in Dasara. During the 10-day festival, various classical music performances are held in the courtyards of the palace. Dance groups and orchestras perform at a range of venues against the backdrop of processions through the streets, involving decorated elephants, horses and camels. Visual art, repertory theatre, music and literature are researched and taught at various institutes.

The results presented in this case study of Mysore are based on a seminar-cum-workshop themed around the overlap between three arenas of knowledge and practice, which have so far developed largely independently of each other. These are, first, the preservation and presentation of Mysore's culture, embodied in the heritage buildings, relics and place associations from the past. Second, promotional flows of capital, people, information and visitors for business and leisure purposes. Third, planning intervention to rehabilitate and revitalize various heritage and cultural dimensions of the city. The seminar/workshop was considered to be a true innovation conference, exploring the city's challenges in relation to place branding. The occasion was also utilized to explore value-creating opportunities with possibilities of co-creation on a continuous basis.

The first part, the seminar, raised the issue of the cultural consequences of mobility and migration, particularly business travel and tourism, addressing openly the issues at hand: has enough thought been given, especially by policy-makers, to the role of culture in the process of welfare creation while preserving Mysore's quality of life? The second part, a workshop, was aimed at bringing together experts who were occupied, actively or passively, with those issues and policy-makers on the one hand, and on the other, consumers with their diversified interests and expectations. The philosophy was that, ultimately, Mysore's cultural assets deserve to be preserved. Within the context of the overwhelming impact of globalization, cultural heritage serves as a beacon enabling the present and future generations of the region to understand their roots and cope with the speed of change. An innovative approach was taken to address these issues and, in addition, to work out a process for elevating the cultural and heritage dimensions of the city in favor of successful place branding.

## Case Study Workshop

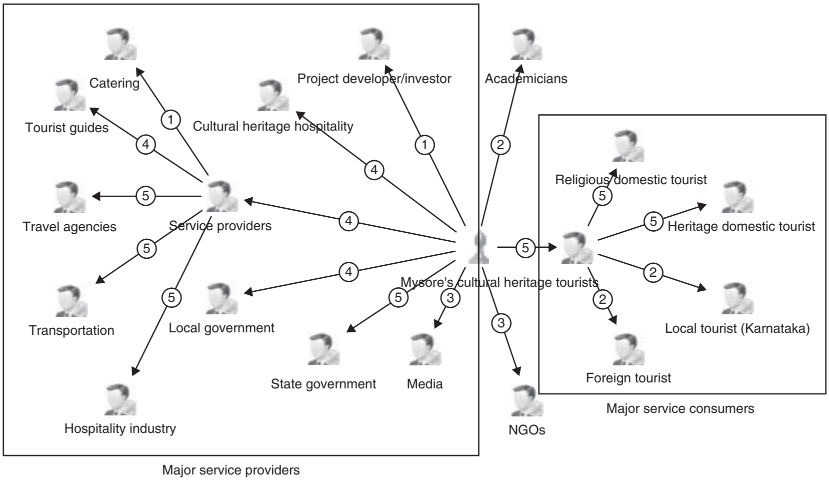
With prior announcement and direct contact with various key informants and decision-makers of Mysore, a reasonably broad cross-section of stakeholders was attracted to this event, held on 4 May 2008. All participants were residents of the city of Mysore and belonged to different segments of the population. They were also related directly or indirectly, or interested in heritage and cultural issues of Mysore. Some belonged to hospitality industry operating specifically on cultural-heritage-related services. Some could be identified, however, as general service providers who were not focused specifically on a heritage- and culture-related market. Some participants were project developers and investors working on the development of cultural heritage. Some belonged to service facilitators such as local and state government organizations. Also, media persons specifically interested in the events and festivals of the city were present. The other section was a mix of major consumers: some occasional tourists in their own city, if only for the historical heritage, temple or religious events. Academics and NGOs were a section of participants who contributed to both the provision of services and service consumption. Though only approximately twenty-five participants were present, they represented a reasonably complete cross-section of stakeholders, and were able to contribute additional information on behalf of any missing groups of stakeholders.

## Mysore's Stakeholders and Their Analysis

Considering Mysore's cultural heritage as the major product for place branding, and innovation of required services in order to improve brand personality and positioning (Hankinson 2004), was undertaken during the workshop. Through a systematic interaction of the moderator of the workshop with the participants, various stakeholders were identified and a classification of various categories of them was made. As shown in Figure 16.1, the general network of service providers was identified as being complex and close-knit, with a high number of relationships. Tourists, on the other hand, split into categories, were identified as having limited network relationships.

Subsequently, the importance of each category of stakeholders, or their ranking in relation to their contribution to the provision of services, or consumption, was listed. The rankings, ranging from 1 for a minor to 5 for a major contribution, resulting from this exercise are shown in Figure 16.1. In this exercise, tourists identified as major consumers are diverse and thus they cannot be taken as a single entity. However, one category, or two categories, of tourists could be chosen to provide the "voice of the customer". The chosen categories, despite being only limited segments, are considered to reflect interests and expectations for the innovation of Mysore's cultural heritage. On the basis of this, the underlying values and related properties were identified as shown below.

**FIGURE 16.1 | Mysore's stakeholders and their ranking**

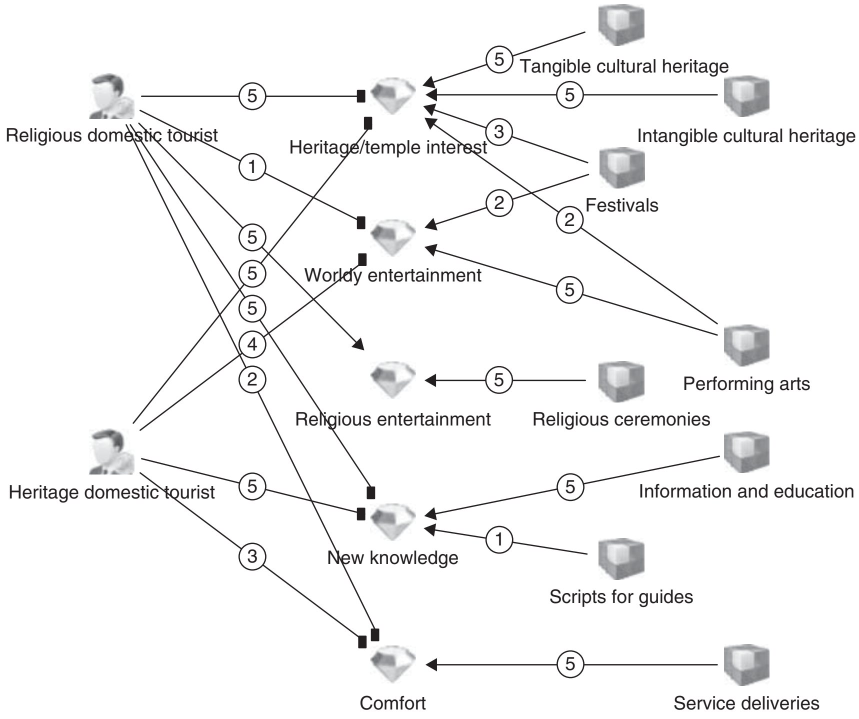

Catering
Tourist guides
Cultural heritage hospitality
Project developer/investor
Academicians
Travel agencies
Service providers
Transportation
Local government
Hospitality industry
State government
Media
Mysore's cultural heritage tourists
NGOs
Religious domestic tourist
Heritage domestic tourist
Local tourist (Karnataka)
Foreign tourist
Major service consumers
Major service providers
①
②
③
④
⑤

## Mysore Stakeholders' Values and Attributes

The consumer segments that were selected in the earlier process of the workshop consisted of two categories of domestic tourist: heritage and religious. Though heritage tourism and religious tourism are of relevance in this city, they were separated in order to identify the unique features of the voice of the consumer. The corresponding interests and expectations were identified as consumer "values", and a reasonably comprehensive list of them were able to be generated during the interaction. However, the importance of these values, or ranking, was not decided without argument. With some logical reasoning put forward by the moderator, and with trial and error, the ranking was accepted by the participants, as shown in Figure 16.2.

For the domestic heritage tourist, heritage objects including temples have considerable value. Surprisingly, s/he would also value the expansion of his/her knowledge on heritage. For example, s/he would be interested to know what is decisive for making a place or building a heritage object, and what issues are strongly related to history and culture. A heritage tourist would also value, to a certain degree, worldly entertainment, such as folk dancing and music, if only during the Dasara festival. S/he would not place much value on comfort, and would not value at all any religious entertainment in the form of religious processions with deities and accompanying regional classical music during religious festivals. The values for a religious tourist would not be much different. However, in this case, worldly entertainment would not have any value compared to religious entertainment.

FIGURE 16.2 Values and attributes of target consumer segment

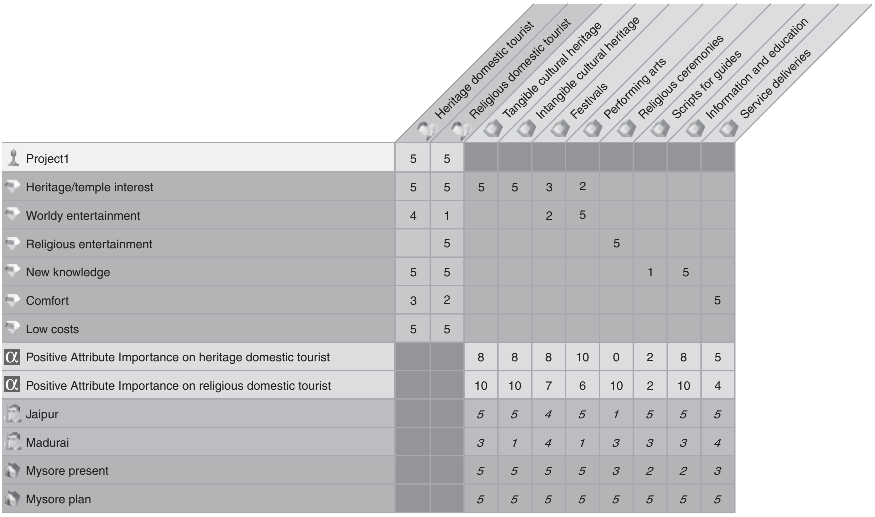

Religious domestic tourist
Heritage domestic tourist
Heritage/temple interest
Worldy entertainment
Religious entertainment
New knowledge
Comfort
Tangible cultural heritage
Intangible cultural heritage
Festivals
Performing arts
Religious ceremonies
Information and education
Scripts for guides
Service deliveries
5
1
5
5
5
4
2
5
3
5
5
3
2
2
5
5
5
1
5

Many properties, or "attributes", underlying various values were identified as contributing factors of value creation. Though many of them were identified as contributing to a separate value on one-to-one basis, some attributes were related to more than one value. The rankings differed much: some emphasized strong dependence of a value on an attribute, and the others somewhat less. In accordance with the expectation, the presence of a tangible cultural heritage product or place was the brand strength. Equally valuable were attributes conveying intangible dimensions of cultural heritage including services around the product or place. Festivals and performing arts scored low as attributes. Religious ceremonies were ranked high for value creation of religious entertainment.

## Innovation of the Competitive Position of Mysore City

The diagram depicting values and attributes and their rankings shown in Figure 16.2, was transformed to a matrix for analysis. The matrix, shown in Figure 16.3, was also expanded, for comprehensiveness. Cost was identified

**FIGURE 16.3** Prioritization of attributes and competitive position of Mysore City



| | Heritage domestic tourist | Religious domestic tourist | Tangible cultural heritage | Intangible cultural heritage | Festivals | Performing arts | Religious ceremonies | Scripts for guides | Information and education | Service deliveries |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project1 | 5 | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| Heritage/temple interest | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | | | | |
| Worldy entertainment | 4 | 1 | | | 2 | 5 | | | | |
| Religious entertainment | | 5 | | | | | 5 | | | |
| New knowledge | 5 | 5 | | | | | | 1 | 5 | |
| Comfort | 3 | 2 | | | | | | | | 5 |
| Low costs | 5 | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| Positive Attribute Importance on heritage domestic tourist | | | 8 | 8 | 8 | 10 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 5 |
| Positive Attribute Importance on religious domestic tourist | | | 10 | 10 | 7 | 6 | 10 | 2 | 10 | 4 |
| Jaipur | | | *5* | *5* | *4* | *5* | *1* | *5* | *5* | *5* |
| Madurai | | | *3* | *1* | *4* | *1* | *3* | *3* | *3* | *4* |
| Mysore present | | | *5* | *5* | *5* | *5* | *3* | *2* | *2* | *3* |
| Mysore plan | | | *5* | *5* | *5* | *5* | *5* | *5* | *5* | *5* |

as one issue that would become a major factor during festival days, when hotels would run out of rooms and restaurants out of seats. However, the participants felt that this would bring complexity to the analysis and deserved to be addressed separately.

During the totaling of attributes, due consideration was given to a separate weighting for heritage domestic tourists and religious domestic tourists. The resulting positive attribute importance values for two separate tourist groups, which were normalized on a 10-point scale, differ considerably. Though to a lower degree, festivals as an attribute does not differ much between the two segments. However, religious ceremonies would have an entirely different relevance to the two segments concerned.

A comparison of the positive attribute importance on a 5-point scale, using general considerations, was undertaken for two major competing cities in India. For these two cities – Jaipur and Madurai – both some distance from Mysore City, the participants were able to express, with reasonable agreement, the varying scores of individual attributes. Jaipur, a cultural heritage centre, scores highly in intangible cultural heritage offered in the form of various directly related services, and in the performing arts. Madurai, a religious heritage centre, scores low on these attributes. However Madurai scores higher than Jaipur on religious ceremonies.

In comparison with these two other major heritage cities, Mysore can now be put in the proper perspective. We can see in Figure 16.3 the consolidated present score for Mysore for every attribute we have taken for consideration. We are now also in a position to focus on which attributes provide the city with scope for innovation. By combining both sets of evaluated scores of positive attribute importance, those for heritage tourists and religious tourists, the participants came to a consolidated list of attributes for Mysore. This also opened up a new perspective for prioritizing attributes so that focused innovation could be undertaken. Attention should be paid to religious ceremonies and the quality of service delivery. Scripts for tourist guides, and information and education in particular for the knowledge creation of the heritage tourist were identified as regimes of innovation with priority. Innovations on these fronts, in combination, would promote the co-creation process of the heritage tourist on the one hand, and on the other, also help to deliver functional benefits in the form of an improved quality of service to the place brand.

## CONCLUSIONS

Place branding is not static, but requires continuous development, as is done by enterprises. A number of practices of enterprise for personality or brand building and positioning are also applicable to place branding. Thus innovation of place branding can borrow much from that of enterprise branding. While undertaking these activities for the innovation of place branding, the role of various stakeholders can be identified as belonging to two sections: service providers and service consumers. A strong relationship building among service providers is a necessary requisite for undertaking innovation. In addition, innovation in place branding should also take into consideration the voice of the consumer. Similar to the importance of stakeholders, the voice of the consumer also carries importance in terms of various issues, or values. The values are usually related to properties, or attributes, the analysis of which is done using ranking. The ranking helps to benchmark a place with respect to other competing places. It also helps to focus on those prioritized attributes that would make a place unique and increase its competitive position. The case study of Mysore offers an example to illustrate the innovation of its heritage and cultural dimensions.

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