

Mabillard, Vincent; Pasquier, Martial; Vuignier, Renaud

Book

Place Branding and Marketing from a Policy Perspective: Building Effective Strategies for Places

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Routledge Studies in Marketing

PLACE BRANDING AND MARKETING FROM A POLICY PERSPECTIVE

BUILDING EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR PLACES

Vincent Mabillard, Martial Pasquier,
and Renaud Vuignier



Place Branding and Marketing from a Policy Perspective

As part of an emerging literature on place branding, this book fills the important gap between practice-oriented literature—which lacks in-depth and critical analysis—and technical academic literature—which tends to miss down-to-earth practitioners' concerns and to overlook policy and political contexts. Providing frameworks and knowledge on how to practice place branding effectively, this book anchors place-branding practices in a solid analytical framework. It presents place-branding practices through the lenses of public sector marketing, strategic management, and governance processes and structures, as well as communication tools.

Marketing a place is more than creating a logo and a motto; this book presents the key strategic aspects to be considered when promoting a place. Readers will gain knowledge about the most important features of place promotion: the development of brands and marketing campaigns in the public sector, the establishment of dedicated politico-administrative structures, and the increasing involvement of various stakeholders that play a central role as place promoters.

This book will be a valuable resource for researchers and postgraduate students across place branding, marketing and management, and urban studies, as well as public management, administration, and policy. The practical conclusions discussed in the book will also appeal to practitioners, business consultants, and people working in public administration and politics.

Vincent Mabillard is Professor of Public Management and Communication at the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management of the Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium. He holds a PhD from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. His research interests focus on government transparency and accountability, social media communication, and place branding and marketing.

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Renaud Vuignier works for the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. He contributed to this book purely in his private capacity, when he was a research fellow at the University of Lausanne. Opinions expressed here shall therefore not be regarded as official positions but as personal points of view.

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Building Effective Strategies for Places

**Vincent Mabillard, Martial Pasquier,
and Renaud Vuignier**



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Public Policies



Attractiveness



Place Branding



Place Marketing



Place



Stakeholders



Prioritisation



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Foreword

Place branding is firmly back on the agenda. We thought that, in the direct post-COVID context, the focus would be on crisis communication and aggressive tourism promotion to get the hospitality industry back on track. However, in many places, the COVID restrictions had barely been lifted, and we were faced with a tight labour market. Business is back, but the employees have moved on. Many people are now working in healthcare or logistics. Intensive tourism promotion is no longer desirable, as international travel bounced back in 2022, and dramatic growth is expected even though the systems cannot cope, partly because of a tight labour market. Hence, what is maybe more needed than ever is reputation management.

While one can boast the most beautiful place brand image, when it is lopsided, it can sometimes stand in the way of attracting certain talents and investors. We see this especially in places that are in the periphery, even cities. Many such places have a strong positive tourism image, but the “space, peace and quiet” associations can be unfavourable when it comes to convincing people to live and—especially—work there. Professionally, people are often looking for a dynamic environment. With the tight labour market, which is pressing in major metropolitan areas, let alone in the periphery, where a brain drain has been going on for a long time, this is becoming a serious problem. Many companies are now involved in employer branding to reinforce their image as a good employer, but one might wonder whether it would not be more efficient and effective to jointly engage in city and regional branding. In this regard, there are clear opportunities there for destination management organisations, city marketing organisations, and policymakers.

Then, there are the obvious challenges places face considering the image-impacts of their governance. Populism is on the rise in numerous countries, which is often unfavourably evaluated by external audiences. Positions that governments take on the war in Ukraine have reputational consequences. In the 2022 Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index, Russia dropped from halfway up the index to the bottom, an exceptional and unprecedented fall in global reputation, which is something other governments should consider when declaring their allegiances. All this also means that identities are under pressure and that culture and heritage should be treasured. Needless to say, the economic repercussions of the war and pandemic—the energy crisis and economic slowdown—have an impact on international investment decisions, monetary mobility, and exports.

In addition, the issue of overtourism is back from never being really gone. Post-COVID consumer awareness around sustainability, the attractiveness of travelling close to home, and building back better and all—forget it. We urgently need to make rigorous long-term decisions about what kind of tourism we want and for whom and how it competes with other economic activities. In that context, it also helps to have a clear positioning strategy and reputation-management approach as a city, region, or country, because if we, as a city or regional community, know who we are, where we come from, where we want to go, and what we want to become known for, then we can also make informed decisions about what kind of tourism, activities, and residents we want; what kind of investments we want; and which talents we are going to attract. We must therefore evaluate these choices, for example, by means of place-branding research.

Therefore, I am delighted with this new book, continuing the rich tradition of place-branding scholarship. What is particularly reassuring is that it applies a territorial public-policy focus. Considering some of today's challenges described previously, it is clear that the simplistic view of place branding as consisting of logos, slogans, and campaigns is insufficient. We need place branding and marketing as concepts that take aim at purpose, positioning, and grand strategy; as a perspective to policymaking insofar as branding and marketing activities need to be coordinated with public policies; and to guide action from the perspective of external impact (i.e., how will our actions be perceived by external audiences? Are they offering solutions to “public problems”? Are these actions “on brand”?).

So, there is a future for the more serious fundamental policy-driven approach to place branding and marketing as advocated in this book, and hence, I sincerely hope you enjoy the read.

Robert Govers
Chairman, International Place Branding Association



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1 Introduction

Competition is not just for private companies. It is also a determining factor in place development, because investments made in one region will not be made in another. A person who chooses a place to live will go to only one place. Not to mention tourists, who are spoilt for choice. Many places have designed strategies to position themselves, gain attention, attract target groups (such as tourists and companies), or influence the course of events on the world stage. Most cases studied in the academic literature have focused on the West, showing, for example, the role played by the United States and the European Union (EU) in global affairs or the capacity of certain areas to transform or even reinvent themselves in a post-industrial context. However, concerns about increasing attractiveness have emerged on all continents.

Saudi Arabia is an interesting example. With a view to reducing its dependence on oil, in 2016 the government presented its Vision 2030, a development programme for the country with the following objectives: diversify the economy, play a greater role in global affairs, especially through initiatives related to developing a greener economy, and boost the tourism sector.¹ The aim is to change Saudi Arabia's image and reinforce its attractiveness. Concrete projects have been put in place since the presentation of the programme: NEOM smart city, Diriyah Gate, Riyadh Art, and especially sports events: Saudi Arabia will host the Asian Winter Games in 2029 and the Asian Games in 2034 and is in discussion with other countries to bid for the organisation of the 2030 football World Cup. The country has created an Events Investment Fund that finances and oversees the development of sports venues and is part of the global plan to boost the tourism sector.

The Saudi Vision 2030 is just one example of many place-development programmes that flourish all over the world. Of course, they include many promotional campaigns and material and pay much attention to marketing and branding. These promotion efforts are not limited to countries. Many regions and cities have invested considerable time and energy in designing strategies and developing communication campaigns. In the EU, the European Committee of the Regions has emphasised the necessity of adopting a long-term policy framework, developing strategies to enhance local and regional governance, and successfully dealing with

2 Introduction

the sustainability challenge faced by all places.² At the local level, many cities have also designed strategies to define their development's objectives. This is the case of Norwich, in England, where the City Council produced a document in 2018 entitled "Norwich 2040 City Vision". Like those of many other cities, this programme emphasises the actions to be undertaken to increase the city's attractiveness and make it a place to visit, work, live, and invest.

As these examples show, place promotion and the definition of clear targeted objectives to make places grow is a global trend. They also highlight the central role played by national, regional, and local authorities, which design the strategy and decide on the main objectives. In doing so, they also bring certain issues into the public spotlight by putting them on the political and administrative agenda. This calls for a better understanding of the interplay between public policies and place development, marketing, and promotion. This book's main purpose, then, is to address place-branding and -marketing issues from a policy perspective. This points to key questions, such as: how do marketing and branding efforts participate in the broader process of place development? How should these policies be coordinated to ensure the successful development of a place? How should the characteristics of places be addressed from a policy perspective? And how are policy objectives connected with the strategy designed to develop and promote places through marketing tools?

These questions will certainly capture the attention of all readers keen on learning about places and their development, students interested in place marketing and branding, researchers working in the field, and practitioners who are confronted with them on a daily basis. Based on these questions, students and scholars alike will find reflections that may provide them with content and paths for future research. Practitioners (place-brand managers, economic developers, managers in charge of destination marketing, etc.) will also find content that may interest them. The book contains recent contributions, experiences from various parts of the world, and key considerations regarding the design and implementation of place-branding and -marketing strategies. In addition, the prioritisation process (the definition of target groups), as well as the marketing toolbox, are presented in detail in the book.

From an academic perspective, this book falls within an increasing volume of contributions dedicated to place marketing and branding. In the last decade, several books have addressed these concepts extensively (e.g., Kavaratzis et al., 2015; Campelo, 2017; Medway et al., 2021). However, our book fills a gap in the existing literature by emphasising the policy approach to place branding and marketing. We chose to spend less time on issues related to brand constructs, identity, values, and measurement. The experiential approach (e.g., "sensing" the place and questions of place-brand authenticity) is also not addressed here. Once again, we prefer a policy perspective on marketing and branding in the case of places. This includes the importance of political factors, often overlooked in the literature. However, as stated by an interviewee in a contribution from Hanna and Rowley (2011, p. 1797), "if you launch and political leaders don't want to be involved, the brand is dead".

Our book therefore takes a different angle, focusing less on branding and marketing *per se* and giving more importance to the policy environment in which place promotion evolves. In addition to this enrichment of the literature, the book provides an innovative pedagogical approach. In this regard, concepts are almost

systematically defined, explained, and illustrated with examples, stemming either from our knowledge or experience or from interviews with practitioners who manage place branding and marketing in their respective city, region, or country. Pictograms are used in most chapters to illustrate the book's key concepts. In addition, they help readers understand certain concepts, especially when these concepts are connected to others. This is the case, for example, in Part IV, where the process for developing a branding and marketing strategy is described.

Another added value of our book stems from the numerous examples, from all over the world (Figure 1.1), that we insert in the chapters. These examples differ from the more "traditional" cases usually found in the literature (Western countries, large European or North American cities). The inclusion of non-Western, under-commented cases responds to the concern raised by Peters (2023), who emphasised the need to better understand political and administrative processes under authoritarian regimes. It also enables us to present the case of an African country, Benin, that does not receive much attention, like many other states on the continent. Except for several examples in Ghana, South Africa, or Tanzania (mostly for destination marketing), the situation in Africa remains a mystery for most readers.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I starts with considerations on public policies, the policy process and cycle, and how these elements relate to place-development and promotion issues (Chapter 2). As places compete in a global environment, they focus increasingly on their competitiveness: what kind of measures and policies should be implemented to attract companies and investors, tourists, and residents? Chapter 3 is dedicated to these developments and discusses the notion of place attractiveness and global competitiveness. The last contribution to this part is conceptual in nature: Chapter 4 addresses the notions of place marketing and branding. It presents the main characteristics of the field; discusses the relationship between the two concepts; and explains how they have been, and still are, used to help places increase their attractiveness.

Part II focuses on key elements that can be found in public policies but are more salient in place marketing and branding. First, these elements include a place's characteristics, which influence the way that cities, regions, and countries can be promoted. As attractiveness factors strongly relate to places' characteristics in most cases, Chapter 5 presents this aspect in detail, with several examples. Then, Chapter 6 shows how stakeholders, especially residents, tend to increasingly shape place-branding and -marketing processes. The importance that should be attributed to participatory processes is often highlighted in the literature (e.g., Kavatzis, 2012; Zenker and Erfgen, 2014). Targeting specific individuals, groups, and/or markets, through prioritisation, is central in place marketing and branding. Chapter 7 explains how this process takes place in cities, regions, and countries and presents examples and boxes that illustrate prioritisation. Finally, Chapter 8 lists marketing tools and the specificities of places in this regard. The application of marketing tools in the public sector, and for places, is extensively discussed.

Part III provides a critical perspective on the literature on place marketing and branding. It includes contributions from guest researchers. Chapter 9, written by Cecilia Pasquinelli, argues that diverging place-brand meanings are an integral component of any place brand. It discusses the conceptual and managerial



Figure 1.1 Cases presented in the book

challenges of these meanings through a critical analysis of the literature. Chapter 10 reflects on what constitutes expertise in place branding and how best practices and norms are “organised” in the field. It is written by Katie Sullivan, Jon Bertilsson, and Jens Renstamm. Chapter 11, written by Bowen Zhang and Mihalis Kavaratzis, addresses place marketing and branding from a different perspective, mainly due to political and cultural divergences. It presents the case of Chongqing (China) and shows that communication campaigns strongly differ in a country governed by an authoritarian regime. Chapter 12, written by Bellarminus G. Kakpovi, describes the case of Benin (West Africa). It explains that national efforts are essential in developing countries and that infrastructure, security, and economic policies are of critical importance.

Part IV is more prescriptive, proposing processes, criteria, and tools for people and organisations who need to elaborate on strategies and implement place development. This part is divided into two chapters: the first devoted to strategy design and implementation and the second to the evaluation of strategies and actions undertaken. While most articles and books draw on classic marketing and branding methods, Chapter 13 approaches the subject from a public-policy perspective, integrating these place-promotion activities. The same applies to Chapter 14. A place is not a product or service like any other, for which it is easy to measure the effectiveness of the measures taken. Here, too, a combination of public-policy and marketing approaches is required if we are to properly monitor and evaluate the strategies developed and actions taken. Several examples, directly taken from interviews with practitioners, enrich this last part of the book.

Notes

- 1 www.visitsaudi.com/en/understand/vision-2030-how-saudi-tourism-is-evolving.
- 2 <https://cor.europa.eu/de/news/Pages/Regional-Development-Strategies-the-key-for-local-and-regional-governance.aspx>.

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Part I

Conceptual and theoretical bases

The first part of our book relates mostly to the theoretical and conceptual bases of place marketing and branding, addressed from a public-policy perspective. It is important to note that deciding on a particular development and promotion path for places does not limit one to a marketing and branding exercise. We do not argue that marketing itself has no importance, nor that place branding cannot be addressed from a marketing perspective; however, we want to emphasise the central role played by both political and administrative institutions. Indeed, the decision to engage in place development and promotion, which often mobilise marketing tools, is often taken by the local, regional, or national authorities at some point. Matters may evolve over time, depending on the people and parties in power, on the place's role or projected role (e.g., being the number-one tourist destination in a given area), and on issues that affect the world (e.g., a conflict or war).

Regarding this last point, a country can, for instance, become a peace broker and change its image thanks to the role it plays in a conflict, especially when pressed to play that role. At the same time, its potential vested interests may cast doubt on the sincerity behind the willingness to act as a peace broker. The same rationale applies when a place highlights its competitiveness and quality of life. Targeted companies and residents will need more than slogans and may compare offerings from several places in detail. Through marketing, the offering proposed by a place should match the expectations of the groups targeted. However, in order to align the place's image with what is offered, coordination between various public policies will be needed, bringing public management into the reflection process.

For this reason, Part I first presents how places are considered in the broad context of public policies. This includes how problems (e.g., safety) make their way to the top of the agenda of public authorities; how the definition of problems through authorities' decisions affect—and is affected by—places' characteristics; and how regional features influence, and sometimes even determine, the development and promotion of certain areas. The connection between sectoral and place attractiveness policies, and the increasing needs to coordinate different policies, are highlighted in Chapter 2.

This call for a better coordination of sectoral policies results, as already presented in many academic contributions and reports from international institutions, from the need for places to position themselves in an increasingly competitive world. For instance, the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have published several reports that emphasise the importance for places, and especially cities, of improving their competitiveness. These reports argue that becoming more competitive will help reduce poverty and promote prosperity for the whole population. A recent OECD report (2021) stresses the necessity to coordinate and ensure consistency between policies, including environment, tourism, and energy. Sound, targeted, coordinated investment in these policies will, for instance, allow places to position themselves as sustainable destinations.

Chapter 3 focuses on attractiveness in a context of increased competition between places. While Chapter 2 highlights the rationale and dynamics *behind* place marketing, Chapter 3 presents the *concrete results* that place marketing seeks to achieve. It first presents the importance of attractiveness, the ultimate goal of place branding and marketing. It then discusses the concept of competitiveness and how places are compared and ranked. In certain countries, indexes have been created to classify places according to their level of competitiveness. This is the case of the UK, where a report entitled “UK Competitiveness Index” is published regularly (Huggins et al., 2021). At the European level, Dijkstra et al. (2023) have published the EU Regional Competitiveness Index 2.0, which focuses on differences in competitiveness between European regions. Chapter 3 also elaborates on the attractiveness-related issues at stake for the main target groups: companies and investors, tourists, and residents. The capacity to compete on the global stage and places’ specific characteristics are crucial. However, the way in which attractiveness measures and policies are coordinated and implemented also matters strongly for places. In addition, as shown by the cases presented, an added creative touch or even an innovative trick, either in content or in the way it is communicated, can also become the detail that makes the difference for digital and time-pressured audiences.

Finally, Chapter 4 explains the development of branding and marketing practices and studies related to place development and promotion. It starts with an explanation of the development and application of marketing principles and tools in the public sector and the limitations of using such an approach in public-sector organisations. It then presents the use of this marketing and branding approach in the context of places. It also describes how marketing and branding can be mobilised to develop an integrated, holistic perspective on place development and promotion through a public-policy perspective. In this regard, the logic that guided the drafting of the whole of Part I is represented in Figure I.1.

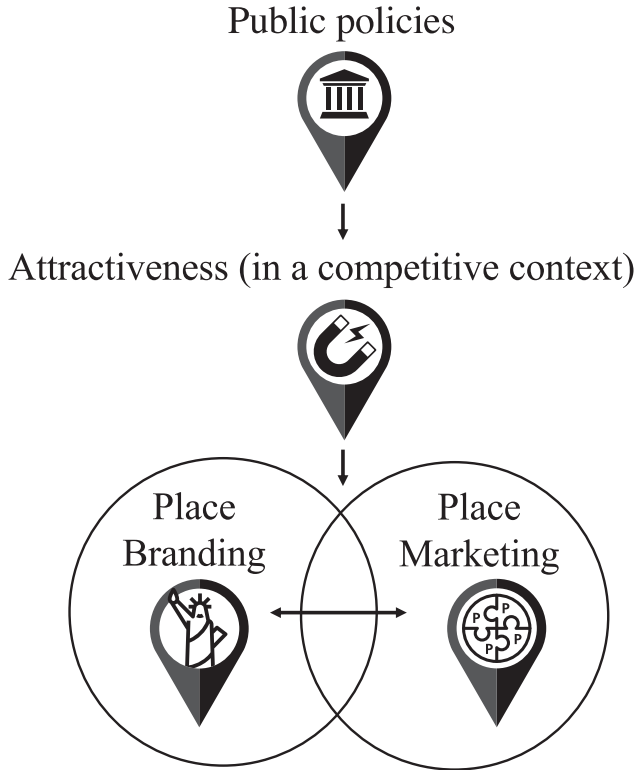


Figure I.1 The key concepts developed in Part I

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2 From a public-policy to a place-marketing perspective



2.1 Introduction

Most publications dealing with place branding and marketing begin by defining, delimiting, and explaining the notion of “place”. While the concept of place is explored in Chapter 5, it should be acknowledged at the outset of this book that a territory and a place, while often covering the same location, are not totally interchangeable concepts. For Duarte (2017, p. 3), “one difference that becomes clear between the literature on place and territory is that often the former focuses on affects, and the latter on politics”. On the one hand, a territory is a delimited institutional construct, defined in a top-down manner. A place, on the other hand, relates to perceptions of third parties. While it can also refer to a geographic perimeter, it mostly follows a bottom-up approach, whose contours do not necessarily correspond to institutional delimitations. Let’s take an example. The city of Newark, in the state of New Jersey, lies at the outskirts of New York City (located in the state of New York) and is home to a major airport. The elected officials of Newark, New Jersey, develop public policies for their residents, not for those of New York State (territorial approach). A European landing in Newark, on the other hand, will say that they are landing in New York (place approach). In this book, we will therefore use these two concepts depending on whether we are addressing these concepts from a public-policy (territory) or promotional perspective (place). It has to be said, however, that depending on the specific context, a clear-cut differentiation between the two is difficult to grasp.

The world is organised into independent states that grant each other mutual recognition and cooperate at the international level. South Africa, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Israel, and so on are all sovereign countries with their own history, culture, and political system, and they all organise themselves to deal with the specific and global problems facing them. The case of the COVID-19 crisis that began in 2020 provides an illustration. While the pandemic hit all countries in a similar manner, the responses from individual countries were strongly different: China applied a “zero-COVID” policy, with PCR tests on a massive scale, strict lockdowns, and the shutting down of numerous activities, with major social and economic consequences, most of these measures being lifted only in December 2022. The Brazilian authorities and the country’s president, Jair Bolsonaro, downplayed the health impacts of the virus (which was described as a “little flu”) and prioritised

treatments other than vaccination. At the same time, Israel banked on early vaccination, accepting paying a higher price for vaccines and providing manufacturers with statistical data on vaccines' effectiveness in return. International cooperation on the subject remained relatively restricted, with each country making its own healthcare and political response to the crisis. If we look at another very important issue, global warming, countries engage in dialogue and make commitments under international agreements (such as the 2015 Paris agreement on climate change) while remaining very independent as regards the implementation of these agreements and concrete measures to be taken.

As these examples show, our societies' major problems are debated and managed within national borders. And yet, more and more public problems extend beyond the frontiers of individual countries. Take the example of mobility. With population growth; citizens being concentrated in urban areas; and a more globalised economy that puts distance between the producer of a good or service and its consumer, the development of tourism and leisure activities, and so on, personal travel and freight transport have become public problems that have no regard for borders: downtown areas and major traffic arteries are congested, and trains and planes are often crowded at peak hours and during ever more concentrated vacation periods. An apparently trivial incident (a strike, inclement weather) or accident often creates enormous chaos, significant delays, and irritation. Mobility and its negative externalities such as atmospheric pollution, noise, and lost productivity have become major political problems that affect certain countries and regions more than others. A recent study conducted by Fuller et al. (2022) estimates the number of premature deaths worldwide due to various types of pollution at more than 9 million annually. This equals smoking as a cause of death (Münzel et al., 2022).

While the most important public problems are matters for national governments, increasing numbers of problems that affect people's daily lives are having to be dealt with at a smaller scale, that of regions and cities. This chapter first briefly sums up the manner in which public problems are dealt with and then goes on to describe the reasons for which certain problems must be tackled at the level of territories. The third part of the chapter addresses the growing development of marketing and branding in the public sector, and then more specifically for places. Last, the final part examines the complex question of the relationship between marketing and branding in the context of the promotion of places.

2.2 From public problem to public action

Government interventions to solve economic and social problems are historically relatively recent, developing in the 20th century: agricultural policy, energy policy, social policy, and so on (Knoepfel et al., 2015; Muller, 2013). In earlier times, states concentrated on sovereign functions: external security with defence and diplomacy, internal security with police, respect for the law with justice, the collection of taxes to provide resources, the issuing of currency, education, and the construction of major infrastructures.

Today, national governments are increasingly called upon to intervene in order to provide responses to demands or situations that are deemed unacceptable: the

protection of animals, combating obesity, the prohibition of smoking in public places, the prohibition or authorisation of the consumption of substances such as cannabis, the protection of forests, and so on. Matters that previously were not even a subject for discussion can turn into a public problem for which the state must propose solutions. What is more, states must increasingly intervene to correct deficiencies related to markets, since markets are not always able to arrive at the best solution for the community. And both problems and solutions implemented may differ considerably from one country to another. Water is a rare resource in many countries and access to it will become an issue in a majority of countries in the coming years. Since 2010, access to clean water has been recognised as a human right by the United Nations General Assembly. The situation is generating growing conflicts over water use for agriculture, citizens and industry. Water is thus a common good, in that consumption by one user can prevent consumption by another. This means that water is not a private good, and its operation must be regulated, as a growing number of countries are doing.

Most problems that concern countries and territories are dealt with politically by means of public policies (Dupuy and Thoenig, 1985). Analytical and pragmatic approaches¹ in public policies, also known as the “science of action”, usually distinguish between five major phases of a public-policy cycle (see Figure 2.1).

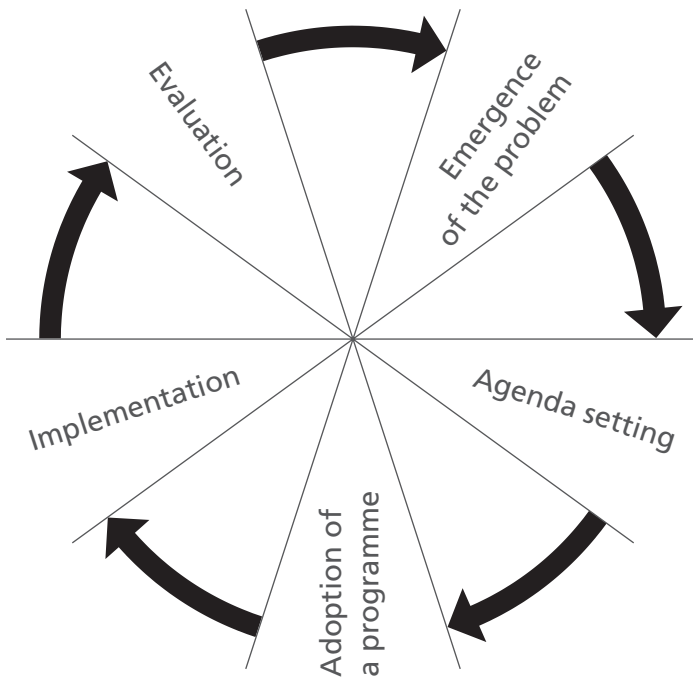


Figure 2.1 The public-policy cycle

Source: Adapted from Knoepfel et al. (2015)

- Emergence of a problem: before a problem can be debated, it must emerge in society. Climate issues provide a good example. As early as the late 1950s, researchers drew attention to the problem of climate warming, and from the 1970s the subject began to be debated internationally. *Limits to Growth* (1972),² written by three scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in response to a commission from the Club of Rome, pointed to the limits to economic growth imposed by existing resources and environmental impacts. And yet it took decades before the subject gained permanent traction in the media and was championed by political parties that had substantial institutional weight and were thus in a position to demand government action. Some subjects come to the fore and take centre stage rapidly, while others never do.
- Agenda setting: this phase consists in recognition of a problem's existence, its delimitation or definition, and the sketching out of initial attempts at a solution. This process may take years, or even decades, and depends largely on parliaments and elected governments. The process of addressing a problem can easily be held up by changes in executive and legislative powers, current events that demand a reordering of priorities, or tactics employed by administrations and parliaments to bog down analyses and discussions. The problems arising out of advanced old age and dependency among the elderly in France provide a very good example: after more than 10,000 died in the heatwaves of 2003, all political parties called for the development of new legislative provisions. Successive presidents elected in 2007, 2012, and 2017 all promised solutions. In 2022, in the wake of the ORPEA scandal (named after a private group operating in the field of healthcare and accommodation for the elderly), the community realised that although the subject kept returning to the agenda, no significant change had been introduced.
- Adoption of a political programme: once a government acknowledges the existence of a problem, it will propose a programme based on options that have been put forward during debates. Depending on the country, there will be new laws, specific budgetary provisions, the setting up of a new organisation, and so on. In France, the solution found following the fire at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris is an interesting example. Following the April 2019 fire that severely damaged the building, of which the French government is the owner (the cathedral was among the most-visited monuments in the world, thereby contributing to the city's attractiveness to tourists), a public agency tasked with the conservation and restoration of the cathedral was created in December of the same year at the government's instigation.
- Implementation: this involves, on the one hand, translating the political programme into concrete actions and the mobilisation of resources. Many decisions and political programmes often remain ineffectual because of an absence of specifically dedicated resources. The main resources at a government's disposal are financial and human resources, information, infrastructures, time, and legal means (coercion, procedures, etc.). We can take the example of countries that need to mobilise resources to deal with new risks. Further to growing tension between China and Japan, which are very important economic partners, Japan

decided to raise its defence budget from approximately 1% of GDP to 2% by 2027.³

- Evaluation: the final stage in the development of public policy is concerned with its evaluation. Generally, four levels are identified: analyses of efficiency, effectiveness, outcomes, and impacts. Evaluation of a public policy is often conducted a number of years after the introduction of a political programme and should therefore allow corrections to be made. One example is investment in cultural policies and activities. If public communities invest in cultural policies, the purpose is not just to put on shows for huge audiences but also, and especially, to preserve competencies in the creation and conservation of cultural heritage, to disseminate culture in a variety of forms, to create social links, and to improve the well-being of the population. However, it is vital to ensure that these objectives are attained—hence the importance of evaluating public policies.

Whether public problems concern a country or a region, the process of finding solutions remains the same and is an integral part of the functioning of governments and the democratic system. The literature on place marketing or place branding often neglects this aspect, overlooking the fact that no budget is granted unless political authorities recognise the existence of a problem and the legal provisions to enable the commitment of financial and human resources have been approved.

Completion of a public-policy cycle (emergence of the problem, agenda setting, political programme, implementation, evaluation) is not alone sufficient to ensure that services (police officers on patrol, teachers in classrooms, rubbish collectors emptying waste bins, agents tasked with advising the unemployed or exercising control, etc.) are actually implemented and benefit the population. It is also necessary that the organisations in charge of public action have resources at their disposal and use them both efficiently and effectively over time. Examples abound of major public and political debates, political decisions, and promises of implementation that either come to nothing or are only partially fulfilled—budgets do not get voted on, organisations in charge of executing decisions do not have the required competencies or time needed for completion (construction of major infrastructures)—leading to a gulf between the needs expressed at the start and the services provided at the end. A striking example are the so-called “white elephants” (Chapulet, 2018): infrastructures built, usually with public money, for major events such as the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup that are subsequently abandoned or whose post-event operation and maintenance were greatly underestimated.

To this must be added that public problems are generally dealt with in a sectoral, and even highly compartmentalised, manner. If we take the example of social policies and the issue of retirement, the question of the age from which citizens can receive a pension is not generally linked to the question of work for seniors. In spite of the fact that, from the point of view of those aged 60 and over, these two aspects are connected (retirement rights partly depend on the position formerly held), governments deal with the two problems by means of separate policies: a social policy with pension plans and an employment policy with a component for seniors (help

in finding a job, payroll taxes paid by the government when a senior is hired, etc.). This compartmentalisation in dealing with public problems is, as we shall see later, one of the reasons for the development of a territory-based approach.

2.3 The territorialisation of public policy

The return of territories and places

In recent centuries, mainly in Europe, the role of national governments has grown considerably as they have developed sovereign functions, centralised resources, and made provisions covering the whole of their territory for organising trade, combating epidemics, and so on (Muller, 2013). In this way, territories and particularly cities have lost part of the power that they exercised by offering their residents protection, an identity, and economic activities. From the late 19th century and especially during the 20th century, territories saw their role and their importance change for many reasons.

The first of these reasons, long-standing but still very much present, involves the economic development of certain specific cities or regions and their need to differentiate themselves. For example, Meyronin (2015) describes the needs of American cities and states which, during the 19th century, stationed immigration officers in New York and certain European countries to attract new residents. And in Europe, with the development of tourism (mountain resorts, spas, seaside resorts, places of pilgrimage), promotional activities are organised for specific places or territories (advertising posters, the holding of events, publication of brochures and guides, etc.).

The second reason is more recent, especially from the 1970s onwards: problems specific to certain territories have required an approach to public policy that is no longer sectoral but territorial. Although this is somewhat reductionist, a distinction should be drawn between cities and rural areas. With regard to cities, problems arising from deindustrialisation, abandoned industrial sites, the exodus of rural populations to urban areas, unemployment, and so on have made it necessary to consider a territory an entity for which public decisions must be coordinated. If Barcelona today is a modern city suffering from potentially excessive tourism (according to the Euromonitor website,⁴ it is one of the world's top ten tourist-destination cities), this is largely the result of massive urban changes carried out in the 1980s, the hosting of the Olympic Games in 1992, and the development of tourist and cultural offerings. Paddison's 1991 article "City Marketing, Image Reconstruction and Urban Regeneration" discusses the case of Glasgow and clearly highlights the link between the specific problems of large cities and the necessity for coordinated new development. de San Eugenio-Vela et al. (2021) put urban-planning and governance issues at the heart of place-branding considerations. In rural areas, the problems are different, although there, too, a coordinated approach is called for. The withering of public services and the closure of local businesses make life difficult for residents, and certain categories of the population in particular: hospital closures, consolidation of schools, digital transformation of public services with no access to efficient communication networks, and closure of post office and

bank branches. Although place-branding and -marketing literature pays only scant attention to situations of this type at the territory level, local actors must take coordinated action at this level and inject new dynamism into the region.

The third reason involves the specific economic development of certain regions and the partial removal of borders for personal mobility and trade. With its common market, the European Union (EU) has fostered the development of cross-border economic regions and the emergence of new arterial roads that cross national borders. The example of the “blue banana”, the Liverpool-Milan axis that passes through the Benelux countries, German industrial regions, Switzerland, and northern Italy (also known as the European backbone or European Megalopolis) illustrates the effects of a return to a more regional approach to problems when national borders are partly eliminated. In a sense, this is no more than a return to an axis of intensive exchanges between two great centres of activity stretching from the North Sea (Bruges, Antwerp, Amsterdam) to the north of the Mediterranean (Venice, Genoa, Florence) that began in the late Middle Ages (Brunet, 2002). The Belt and Road Initiative represents another telling example. Led by China, whose geostrategic ambitions are in no doubt, this project highlights the interdependence between countries and regions and the need to galvanise exchanges in the field. The initiative is based not only on international and regional trade networks that date back more than 2000 years, but its route coincides with intensive trade corridors that are key for value chains in the current globalised economy.

Today, in Europe, the Ardennes brand is an initiative that covers areas of France, Belgium, and Luxembourg. Faced with specific socioeconomic challenges, local and regional authorities decided to develop a place-development strategy encompassing cooperation in various fields such as mobility, economic development, tourism, health, and biodiversity.

This reorganisation of activities by territories sparks competition to attract businesses, talents, and visitors; competition to support exports by local businesses; competition for access to resources that are vital for the economy; competition to retain its population and its businesses by developing a framework for living that is favourable to them; competition to develop and solidify their reputation; and so on (Alaux, 2022). Competition between countries is not new, and as evidence we can cite the world’s fairs or universal exhibitions in which, starting in the 1860s, countries rivalled each other for ingeniousness and creativity in showcasing their characteristics, products, skills, technologies, and values.⁵ However, competition took on a new dimension when places that were not separated by political frontiers found themselves in competition with each other. The concept of a place is taking increasingly diverse forms, because the dynamics of economic, cultural, social, and political activities affect its homogeneity. The COVID-19 crisis obliged businesses to authorise and even promote telework in a structured manner, with the result that many people left the centres of large cities and settled long-term in regions with a higher quality of life. The pandemic will therefore have major impacts on certain regions, whose perimeter in terms of living areas and whose attractiveness could increase. Perimeters can therefore be countries, cities, or defined political regions, but they can also be regions with flexible, changing borders (see Box 2.1).

Box. 2.1 Basel and the regionalisation of public policies

The necessity for a territorial approach to public problems can be illustrated through the example of the Basel region. Basel is a major Swiss city lying on the French and German borders. Both the flow of persons and goods and the region's economic and tourism development cross national borders. The three countries (France, Germany, and Switzerland) and the corresponding regions have therefore set up a number of structures in order to resolve problems using a territorial approach.

- The Upper Rhine Conference: set up at the end of World War II, this body oversaw the construction of the Basel-Mulhouse airport and the creation of a common administration in the port of Kehl. It serves as a basis for exchanges of information and has enabled the study of and search for solutions for all problems in the local area.
- Trinational Eurodistrict of Basel: this is a cross-border institutional cooperation platform dedicated to urban planning, transport, energy, the environment, training, and culture. Formally, it is an association of 81 public communities (regions, cities, and communes).
- Infobest Palmrain: a trinational information and consulting authority. It informs and advises citizens, administrations, businesses, and associations on all cross-border issues concerning Germany, France, and Switzerland.
- EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg: Europe's only binational airport. This airport, opened in 1946, was built by Switzerland on land made available to it by France. Since it lies in French territory, French law applies, but its governance is handled through an agreement signed by both countries. Under this agreement, the chair of the board of directors and the managing director must be of different nationalities. The country has two customs areas, and Swiss nationals can arrive at the airport through dedicated arterials without having to cross the border.
- Upper Rhine Valley: a tourist promotion organisation covering the Basel region, French Alsace, and the German Black Forest.
- BioValley Basel: The BioValley cluster supports businesses and laboratories in the life sciences sector seeking innovation or growth or wanting to set up in the trinational BioValley region.

To these examples can be added other many organisations, including Trisan (a trinational skills centre for cross-border cooperation on healthcare), Interreg projects (Interreg Upper Rhine), and others.

Finally, the role of the state and its administration has changed over time. When the state's focus was on its sovereign functions, its role was to ensure compliance with the law through the police and the justice system, tax collection, and the

army for control of its borders. With the development of state intervention in the economy, for example, through massive investments after the financial crisis of 1929, its role changed to that of a welfare state: a substantial part of its activity was directed towards the resolution of social and economic problems and the provision of associated services (unemployment insurance, health insurance, pension plans, social assistance, labour-market reintegration, transport infrastructures). As limits to state intervention emerged, particularly those associated with the deficits generated by its interventions, the increasing complexity of methods of intervention, and the development of new structures at the international level (e.g. the EU) and at the regional level (creation of agglomerations), the state multiplied its roles and is now expected to take on, in addition to its sovereign, economic, and social functions, a role in providing coordination, support, and assistance for public and private initiatives. This role is especially expected in territories where elected officials and civil servants have to participate in a non-authoritarian manner in numerous activities, commissions, and other projects. Any prescriptive behaviour could lead to the withdrawal of other players who are crucial to the success of these activities and projects. An example is provided by the Grand Genève 2016–2030 place project (see Box 5.1), which includes a *Groupement local de coopération transfrontalière* (local grouping of transnational cooperation) covering the city of Geneva, Swiss and French regions of different levels, associations of communes, and a *Forum d'agglomération* (agglomeration forum) bringing together 75 umbrella organisations with the principal actors in civil society (economy, environment, social, and cultural).

For many reasons, then, by the 1960s, country-level sectoral public policies had become largely insufficient: a territorial approach became necessary to deal with problems that appeared at scales other than that of an entire country and its traditional institutional levels.

Sectoral and territorial public policies

Sectoral public policies that predominate at the country level and territorial public policies that are themselves often aimed at a sectoral level must not be placed in conflict with each other. They are necessarily complementary and must ideally be coordinated (Peters, 2018).

Consistency of public policies within a country is not always a given, if only because of political changes that follow elections or because potentially contradictory measures are decided upon during the development of various public policies. Within a specific city or region, the risk of conflict between various measures is all the more likely because some may be introduced at the national level (taxation, for example) and others at the local level (support for specific economic clusters). This means that attempts must be made to defend the specific interests of the territory and coordinate all measures successfully in order to ensure that the living framework can be as advantageous as possible for residents, to facilitate the reception and stay of tourists, and to enable businesses to establish themselves and develop harmoniously. As an example, a business must be able to secure land or premises

to establish itself, wants to know the fiscal conditions to which it will be subject and the subsidies that it should be able to obtain, must be supported in seeking personnel, and so on. Only economic-promotion agencies that are close to the reality of places are in a position to coordinate existing measures and contribute to the region's economic growth. It is they who, acting as a single window, will contact the various administrations in order to satisfy the needs of these businesses and solve their problems.

To return to the example of mobility problems and the fight against global warming, important decisions such as the prohibition of heat engines, the development of public transport, or taxes on fossil fuels are made by elected authorities and not by agencies in charge of developing a place. As a result, these agencies are obliged to "make do" with these decisions in carrying out their missions. Since most of the measures ultimately designed to promote a place stem from political decisions, it is important to show the linkage between public policies whose decisions are made by elected authorities and the approach taken by the territories, which have their own governments. Figure 2.2 shows the linkage between decisions taken institutionally and places.

Most public policies follow the traditional route as presented at the beginning of this chapter. They have a major impact at the national level on all a country's regions, communes, and towns. At the territory level, the approach is different. The territory's characteristics must be taken into account and public policies must be coordinated. If a country decides to encourage businesses or natural persons to set up by means of specific tax advantages, the regions must then build this element into decisions under their jurisdiction: is there land that can be offered to businesses and what types of businesses are desirable (industrial companies that will set up on the outskirts of cities or service companies that will set up in the downtown area)? Is the city aiming for urban density with high-rise buildings, or

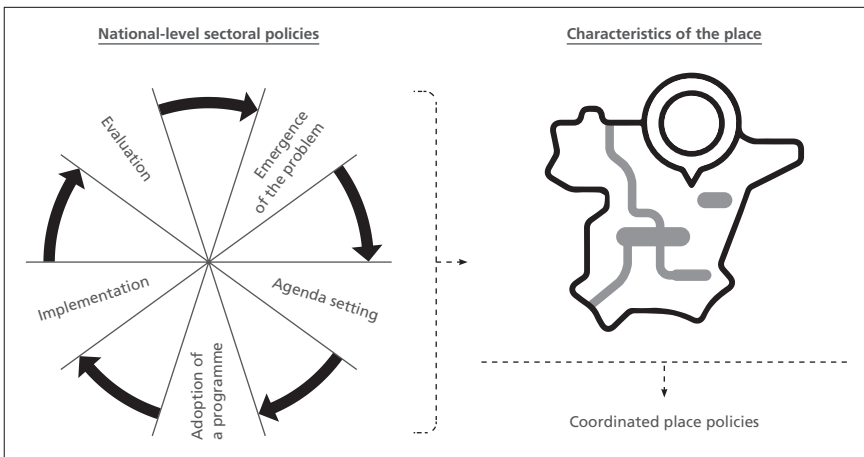


Figure 2.2 Sectoral and territorial public policies

does it prefer qualitative development of the existing environment? The situations of Paris, Dubai, Zurich, Lima, and Cotonou are all different and call for appropriate responses.

In this regard, the work of Martins and Maguire (2019) has identified the conditions for a successful territorial policy. Although their study focused on Europe, the results can easily be carried over to any territory. First of all, a territorial policy must identify and promote specific assets (geography, culture, heritage, etc.) and rely on local actors. But not all territories are created equal, and although some benefit from optimal basic conditions (magnificent scenery, pleasant climate, recognised cultural heritage), others have only very few assets to make use of in their development. Next, all the actors involved must formulate the various policies in a consistent manner. While consistency in policies is important but sometimes difficult to achieve at the national level, at the level of a region or city, it is vital. One need only imagine a region wishing to promote low-key, environment-friendly tourism (walking trails, bicycle tourism, etc.) while at the same time the railway line is abandoned, the last grocery store closes its doors, and installation of an Internet access network is seriously delayed. A territory must therefore pay special attention to making all sectoral decisions taken consistent in terms of both content and timing. Last, a governance system must be set up to identify appropriate decision-making levels and involve the various actors in society. Since there are multiple actors and authority and hierarchy cannot apply in the way that they do in a classic organisation, what is required is to bring together all the important actors and find effective methods of making decisions and taking action. Finding and implementing solutions is no easy matter when multiple organisations and public and private persons sit around the same table, and these same persons and organisations can easily block progress unless they are associated with the orientations taken in one way or another. Finding a balance between specific interests—those of a large number of actors—and the general interest, which must be served by the consistency of different public policies, can be a challenge. The literature on place branding and place marketing too often neglects these aspects, assuming that any process involving stakeholders will enable consensus to be reached, and in doing so overlooking the inevitable power struggles and trade-offs (Algan et al., 2020).

2.4 The development of marketing and branding in the public sector

Marketing is often understood as the art of selling things to consumers. There are good reasons for this: advertising, promoting products and improving sales thanks to analysis, data and techniques belong to marketing. However, this perception of marketing is limited, since the core element of marketing is the exchange (Pasquier and Villeneuve, 2018). There is a (formal or informal) market *as soon as* and *only if* exchanges take place. Therefore marketing, as a science and practice, focuses on:

- a) The exchange itself: the participants in the exchange and the content of what is being exchanged (tangible or not);

- b) The process of exchange: how to make the exchange;
- c) The relationship between the participants in the exchange.

The American Marketing Association provides a definition of marketing, regularly updated and used in numerous works and reports on the subject. It defines marketing as the activity, set of institutions, and processes of creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value to customers, partners, and society at large. It may be applied differently, depending on the participants' roles (consumers, customers, clients, patients, users, providers, intermediaries, regulators), the way these exchanges are operated (in-store, paper-based, digital), and the context in which they take place (open-market, regulated framework, or environment where clients are captive).

In this sense, as a practice, marketing consists in the art of carrying out the exchanges, improving experiences, and further developing those exchanges. As a science, marketing provides information about the market, its characteristics, and the actors involved in the exchanges. It is influenced by various disciplines. For example, behavioural economics, in providing a framework to understand when and how people make decisions and behave, has clear marketing implications. Recent Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences Richard Thaler's research shows, for instance, how decisions can be influenced by nudges, which can be defined as aspects of the choice architecture that alters people's behaviour in a predictable way, without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives (see Thaler and Sunstein, 2008). This opened new insights for marketing techniques influencing behaviours in a low-cost, unobtrusive way by simply changing the way choices are presented to a person.

The article "Broadening the Concept of Marketing" by Kotler and Levy was one of the first publications arguing that marketing should be understood beyond selling products and concerned not only business-focused organisations. It pointed out that "marketing is a pervasive societal activity that goes beyond the selling of toothpaste, soap, and steel" (Kotler and Levy, 1969, p. 10). Together with other contributions (e.g., Butler and Collins, 1995; Cousins, 1990), it gave grounds for traditional marketing principles to be transferable to the marketing of organisations, people, ideas, and by extension to political parties, religious movements, public services, policies, and places. They can then be mobilised in many situations, as long as there is a type of exchange with "something" being exchanged in a certain way and giving a certain role to participants in the exchange.

In the public sector, while a wide range of exchanges take place, selling things occurs in very limited situations. Examples include state-owned enterprises that sell products in an open market, such as the Canton of Valais in Switzerland that sells its own wines (the "Domaine du Grand Brûlé", a vineyard, fully belongs to the public authorities). Exchanges are complex because of their political and legal nature and because they involve numerous actors, with variable roles and relationships. The application of marketing tools beyond products is also linked with the new public management (NPM) approach. In this regard, a critical perspective would question the direct application of marketing tools to the public sector.

For instance, Harvey (1989) shed light on neoliberal entrepreneurialism, Scrivens (1991) doubted that marketing tools would fit with the public sector's specificities, and Matson (1994) asked whether cities could market themselves as Coke and Pepsi do. When looking at practices in the public sector and considering the broad definition of marketing as both a science and a practice, the question is not whether marketing tools should be transferred to the public sector or places. Rather, it is to what extent they can be applied, considering the public sector's specificities.

The nature of the exchange, the objectives of the exchange, and the organisation's customer orientation (or organisational culture) will determine how marketing can be applied by public-sector organisations. In this regard, these parameters are essential: the organisation's degree of autonomy and flexibility in designing services, the possibility of differentiation in organisational strategies, and the capacity to adapt to specific needs. However, public organisations can only influence these parameters in a very limited way. They have to deal with a multiplicity of objectives under a degree of political control, which restrains their autonomy and flexibility. Their accountability is regulated and can be scrutinised, which complicates the justification for marketing activities. Indeed, these activities are often beyond their priorities and remain difficult to evaluate. The CEO of a company can take the risk that half the money spent on marketing activities is wasted (because doing things differently is deemed impossible),⁶ but a public servant or politician can simply not do so if the risk is too obvious.

To assess the applicability of marketing in the public sector, Pasquier and Vileneuve (2018) consider the variability of four key dimensions, encompassing the various points discussed previously (see Table 2.1 as well):

- The type of exchange: limited, forced, or free;
- The degree of differentiation of what is exchanged: low, high;
- The type of relationship of the participants in the exchange: forced, semi-free, free;
- The degree of involvement in the relationship: low, high.

Regarding place marketing, the framework shows that marketing tools can be applied extensively. From a general perspective, exchanges taking place between places (authorities, managers, developers, promoters) and target groups (including companies, visitors, residents) are, in a globalised world, relatively free. Of course, so general a statement is to be nuanced given the numerous existing limits to mobility, including migration policies and economic status, which unequally affect people and organisations around the world. This aspect is developed in Chapter 3, which provides an overview of the global context of competition among places and of the way places respond, with attractiveness policies and various strategies.

The differentiation of place offerings is high: given that place attributes are numerous and diverse, there is a vast spectrum of possibilities and room for manoeuvre for place managers to elaborate offerings, depending on target groups' needs and wishes. This is illustrated by packages of measures presented by economic-promotion agencies to attract companies for their (re)location (for a concrete

Table 2.1 The application of marketing in the public sector

		Absence of exchange	Forced exchange	Free exchange	Degree of involvement in the relationship		
					Low	High	
Degree of differentiation in the offering	Forced relationship	No marketing	Selective use of marketing tools		Low	Restricted marketing	Primacy of relational marketing
	Semi-free relationship	Elements of relational marketing	Possible application of the conceptual approach to marketing and corresponding tools		High	Primacy of the offering and the content of the exchange	Full marketing
Free relationship							

Source: Pasquier and Villeneuve (2018)

example of this, see Monnier, 2015). Not any place can differentiate itself internationally; however, despite public-sector constraints and place-specific limitations, the range of possibilities to elaborate place offerings is vast.

The relationship is relatively free in the context of competition among places. Companies, visitors, and residents can be targeted by various means, including advertising, events, and direct contacts. They can analyse and compare places without regulatory limits and freely decide to relocate, visit, or move. There is no captive client, as it is sometimes the case in the public sector.

The degree of involvement in place marketing can be high, as shown by the possibility for target groups to consider places, learn about them, and visit them. Concerning business locations, a kind of negotiation can even take place between a company and the authorities of places (Chapter 3). Regarding tourism, a wide range of offerings can be imagined, from multi-city, pre-organised tours to self-organised trips. In this regard, digitalisation increases the possibilities for being involved virtually prior to visiting a place in person. It is therefore not surprising that place marketing, both as a practice and an emerging field of research, is currently gaining increased attention.

Reasons underlying the development of marketing in the public sector

The first reason can be found in the development of a competitive approach to the provision of public services. Initiated by NPM, this approach tends to offer the

beneficiaries of services a choice between a number of public and/or private providers (for example, giving parents vouchers for early childcare that can be accepted by public or private daycare services). This tendency is accentuated because the execution of a public task and the relationships between public bodies and persons are increasingly analysed and discussed on the basis of principles or economic considerations (transaction costs, agency costs). Consequently, the choice of operator for the execution of a public task is no longer automatically the administration, but can take various forms (public or private operators, hybrid system, etc.). In addition, and independently of the influence of NPM, many areas of the public sector have grown during these decades and are now competing directly with one another. This is the case, for example, of countries, cities, and regions that are competing to attract or keep residents and businesses and to host sporting or cultural events, conferences, and so on.

Although public services are different in nature from private services, the approach to beneficiaries as consumers is becoming increasingly similar. In fact, there is no longer any difference between public and private services as regards the demands of “consumers” in terms of service quality, information, relationship with the organisation, and so on. This being so, public organisations must take these demands and expectations into account in designing and delivering services. Similarly, citizens are increasingly tending to assert their rights and demand that their needs be treated in a more personalised manner.

Public organisations are also seeking to improve their relationships with beneficiaries, either because the organisations are evaluated through this relationship (satisfaction surveys) or because possible reactions from beneficiaries (demonstrations, public support) legitimise an organisation’s performance, which can be crucial in a situation of resource scarcity. This leads them to develop marketing activities to raise the awareness of beneficiaries and increase their buy-in to the organisation’s activities.

Last, the state’s responsibility in economic activities is becoming more and more important (financial sector, energy, tourism, transport, post, telecommunications, armaments, etc.), and, although the organisations concerned have great management independence and apply the classic rules of marketing, they must still take into account certain characteristics of public services. As a result, the conception of public administration and management models has considerably evolved since the start of the 21st century. The state’s economic activities and services to residents and citizens have grown, necessitating the use of tools, particularly marketing tools from the private sector (see Chapter 8).

Limits on the use of marketing in the public sector

Although, as we saw in the preceding paragraph, marketing tools or a more complete marketing process can be envisaged for public services, substantial limitations on the widespread use of marketing in the public sector must be taken into account.

First, the workings of the public sector primarily reflect a political approach and rationale. Elections, changes in the majority of an elected body, political pressure

arising out of events, the choices or policy directions of charismatic leaders, and others are all examples of elements that can exert a crucial influence on public action and owe nothing to a coordinated marketing approach. Even in cases where a city or region has adopted a marketing concept, putting the concept into practice can be derailed by a difficult financial situation, a delicate political agenda, or opposition from citizens to an urban planning project. The primacy of politics, with its own rationale and its own issues, can never be left out of the picture, and marketing approaches are contingent not on the attainment of merchantable objectives but on political and governmental objectives.

Next, relationships between a public organisation and its beneficiaries are highly complex. Beneficiaries may find themselves playing multiple, occasionally contradictory, roles—for example, asking for a reduction in taxes at the same time as wanting an increase in services (demands regarding the proximity of a hospital or post office, extension of business hours of an office of the administration, etc.). Taking expectations and needs into account is thus very difficult, all the more so because they take multiple forms and are not stable over time. For example, those who suddenly find themselves unemployed will have needs and expectations that they would never previously have thought of. What is more, their needs may range from securing a pension or compensation, to support in the search for a new job, to advice for professional rehabilitation, and doubtless also to a listening ear and a degree of empathy for a trying personal situation. The skills and knowledge required for all these needs often go beyond those available inside a single organisation.

Another problem to consider, as regards collective assets, is the absence of individual needs and satisfaction. Although it is certainly possible to measure a person's satisfaction with a service or a specific relationship (satisfaction with reception in a department, or regarding the usability of a website), it is practically impossible, from a marketing angle, to study satisfaction with a set of public services that fall under a public policy: what is the level of satisfaction with firefighting services? With schools? With the justice system? This being so, combining very incomplete analyses of needs or satisfaction will be wholly insufficient to measure a public initiative's contribution to the community (people may give a very positive assessment of the quality of their relationship with an organisation delivering a service and yet at the same time regard the organisation, the service, or the public policy of which it forms part as unnecessary). It is worth remembering that the sum of individual benefits or satisfactions does not necessarily add up to collective satisfaction when it comes to collective assets.

In conclusion, the question of the use of marketing for public services remains open. It is certainly undeniable that some marketing tools and integrated marketing processes can contribute to improving services and relations with beneficiaries. But marketing presupposes, from a methodological point of view, an appreciation and an understanding of individual needs, expectations, and behaviours (here we are talking of methodological individualism). Consequently, marketing is ill equipped for the study of collective problems and approaches and its use can only be complementary to political, sociological, cultural, and economic approaches.

2.5 The marketing and branding of places

Now that places have to develop and coordinate public policies in relation to their specific needs, and now that marketing and branding processes can be used to promote them, a look at how these elements are intertwined is necessary.

Although there has been intense debate on the question of prioritising or ranking marketing and branding with respect to each other (Govers, 2011; Warnaby and Medway, 2013), and in the absence of a conceptual approach (Mabillard and Vuignier, 2021), it seems necessary, given the specific literature of these two fields (see, for example, the review of the literature by Vuignier, 2017), to consider them from the perspective of complementarity. Taking the proposals of Boisen et al. (2018) further elaborated by Rauhut and Rauhut Kompaniets (2020), place marketing and place branding can be differentiated as follows (Table 2.2).

In terms of the general objective, place marketing is aimed at promoting a place to defined target audiences. Chief among these are businesses for economic development, tourists, and, increasingly, current and potential residents of the place (see Braun et al., 2013, or Casais and Monteiro, 2019). The activities deployed to these target audiences are designed to elicit action from them. Several examples can be considered. Economic-development agencies will attempt to attract new businesses: this involves approaching major international groups to arouse their interest in the potential offered and convince them to set up. Tourist marketing is very straightforward: the aim will be to target specific types of tourism (business or conference tourism, tourism with high economic potential, etc.) or to discourage other types

Table 2.2 Place marketing and place branding

	<i>Place marketing</i>	<i>Place branding</i>
<i>General objective</i>	Promote a place to defined target audiences (businesses, deciders, residents, tourists, etc.)	Develop and promote the identity and image of a place and its characteristics
<i>Objective regarding targets</i>	Aim at behaviour on the part of targets	Build reputation and develop a favourable attitude towards the place
<i>Process</i>	Satisfy needs and a demand	Construct identity
<i>Link with policies connected with the place</i>	Economic, residential, and tourism development	Public diplomacy, soft power, brand image
<i>Management</i>	Mainly top-down	Mainly bottom-up
<i>Activities</i>	Involvement in sectoral networks, targeted communication campaigns, information campaign, development and promotion of specific offerings	Participation in world's fairs, organisation of major events, communication campaigns (e.g., storytelling), image campaigns

(certain places propose to introduce a tax on tourists who come for a day without spending at least a night in accommodation). More recently, the objective of certain place-marketing activities has been to keep current residents and attract new ones. Canada, for example, has a long tradition of immigration (Boyd and Vickers, 2000). In 2014, Malta⁷ introduced a citizenship by investment programme, offering Maltese citizenship to foreigners and their families who pay € 750,000 into the National Development and Social Fund and purchase a property worth at least € 700,000. In 2020, Cyprus ended its citizenship programme begun in 2007 after collecting over € 7 billion. The objective of these activities is to act concretely on the behaviour of target groups. It is not merely a question of promoting an image but of kindling an intention (the desire to visit a city) or an action (decision to settle or set up). The process underlying these marketing actions consists in identifying and building a coherent offering and in understanding the needs and meeting the demands of target groups. Although the marketing strategy and activities must be coordinated between all the actors concerned, action must be taken by dedicated organisations and agencies if a result is to be obtained (mainly a top-down approach).

Place branding must be included in a way that complements place marketing. If a country or region is not well known, has an image that is somewhat negative or not clearly focused, wishes to see its role recognised and taken into account by other countries and other cities and regions, or is faced with the task of uniting internal initiatives, the development and promotion of the place brand become a priority. If countries spend tens of millions of euros to build and operate a pavilion in a world's fair, the primary purpose is to support the country's reputation and image, even though over time, other benefits are expected, such as an increase in the number of tourists or the establishment of new businesses. Place-branding initiatives differ from those of place marketing in that the purpose is to determine a place's identity—based on its characteristics—and to promote it inside and/or outside the territory. What is sought is not a specific behaviour from target groups but the development of or a change in attitudes towards the place. The substantial investment made by Qatar in organising the 2022 FIFA World Cup stemmed from a desire to raise awareness of a country that has fewer than half a million national residents and has regularly been engaged in disputes with its powerful neighbour, Saudi Arabia.

Place branding must also be understood in connection with the development of soft power. Nye (1990) made the distinction between “hard power”, the use of economic and military means to impose one's will on others, and “soft power”, designed to achieve similar results through influence and attractiveness. Among the tools that can be utilised for soft power are reputation building, the organisation of events and conferences, exchanges, a cultural presence in other countries, and so on. Rwanda, although it has far fewer means than Qatar, is taking a similar path. In 2023, it hosted the FIFA Congress and in 2025 will stage cycling's Road World Championships. In 2018, the Rwanda Development Board spent €40 million to secure the right to display “Visit Rwanda” on the shirtsleeves of the Arsenal football team.

The confusion between place marketing and place branding stems mainly from the fact that it is not possible to differentiate them completely in terms of the instruments they use. While the organisation of major events is an integral part of

place branding, communication about such events (advertising campaigns, public relations initiatives) and the development of tourism offerings are activities that are part of classical place marketing. Conversely, only rarely are place-marketing activities conducted without reference to a place brand. When a region develops a marketing campaign to attract new businesses or new residents, it will use a brand or a logo to do so, if only to make the issuer rapidly identifiable. The question of whether a region will use several different brands depending on its target groups or a single umbrella brand depends on the brand strategies adopted (see Chapter 4).

2.6 Place branding and place marketing in territorial policies

It is worth remembering that the daily life of businesses and residents in a country or region is first and foremost influenced by sectoral public policies: security, private and public mobility, schools and training opportunities, unemployment and career development possibilities, social benefits such as daycare for children, or taxes paid.

However, when one takes into account the particular situations of certain places, it becomes clear that these public policies, even when coordinated, are insufficient to allow for harmonious development:

- A place may suffer from a lack of attractiveness, which results in some businesses leaving and not being replaced by new ones (loss of jobs and taxation income, increasing social costs, etc.).
- A place may suffer from a poor image as a result of conflicts, insecurity, or an exodus of its population.
- A place may suffer from pass-through tourists, who create a considerable nuisance from motor-vehicle traffic but spend very little money during the three to four hours they spend in a place.
- A place may lack attractiveness for its residents and economic actors because there are very few cultural or sporting activities and a lack of collective infrastructures.
- A place may have an identity problem and a lack of external recognition because too many logos are used without a clear connection to the region.
- A city may suffer from a lack of dynamism in its central core because when evening comes, employees return to the outskirts and there are very few opportunities for leisure and eating out. The COVID-19 crisis and the development of telework merely reinforced the problem.

Many more examples could be cited to illustrate the fact that the problems of places are very diverse and far from homogeneous. Although the literature abounds in examples of well-known brand strategies (New York, Amsterdam, Lyon) and successful marketing strategies,⁸ for the majority of places, reality is made up of classic economic-development and sustainable-tourism problems, the search to create attractiveness for businesses and residents, or the need for coordination of activities among all actors. In addition to existing territorial policies, branding and marketing

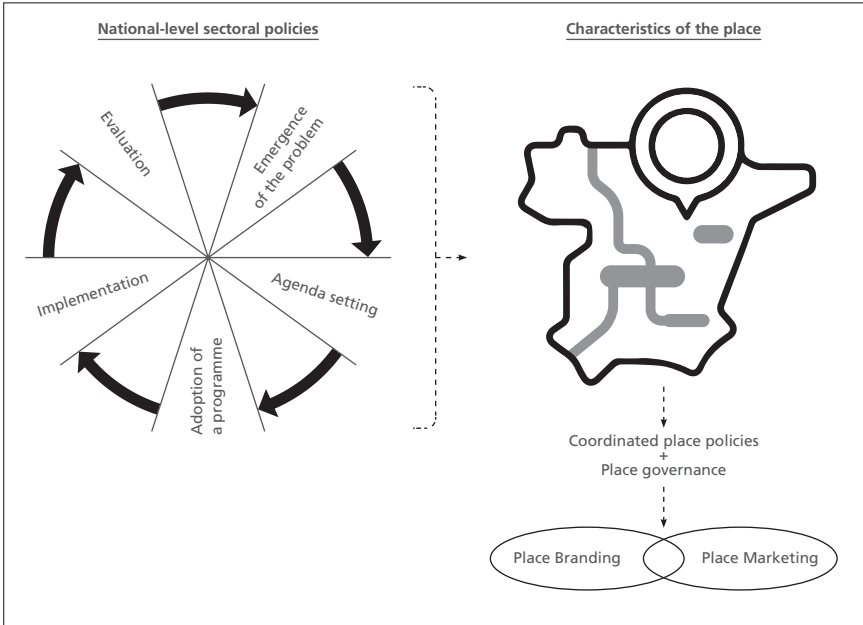


Figure 2.3 Integrated presentation of public policies and place-branding and -marketing initiatives

strategies are developed to increase places’ attractiveness and strengthen their competitiveness. Figure 2.3 provides an overview of the intertwining of sectoral public policies, territorial public policies, and marketing and branding initiatives for a given place.

To the various elements presented previously must be added the need to include specific place governance. Indeed, the development of a place—whether this involves giving it a strong reputational foundation, supporting existing businesses or attracting new ones, favouring the arrival of tourists, paying attention to keeping existing residents or bringing in new ones—is not something that can easily be done solely by traditional elected authorities. Often, a number of public actors from different levels (region, commune, agglomeration) have to collaborate. On the other hand, both the objectives set and the corresponding measures require the involvement of private actors: hoteliers, owners of major infrastructures, mobility actors, chambers of commerce, tourism offices, and so on.

The stakeholders in a place are many, and they must work together to allow reputational and promotional measures to be developed; this is a matter of the governance of a place, this term being particularly important because it implies that decisions cannot be taken in a hierarchical or authoritarian manner (authorities are unable to impose behaviour on private actors outside the legal framework), and specific rules must be defined among all the actors concerned. A place will be all the more active and generally effective in its measures if all actors are in

agreement with the decision-making rules, objectives, and measures taken. If the tourism office of a region secures an agreement with hoteliers and public-transport companies to include free transport in the price of a room, a problem will arise if a major player in transport rejects the agreement. One can easily imagine the problems that would arise if several different brands and logos are used by different actors in a region because they have failed to reach agreement among themselves. An interesting example is provided by StadtMarketing Köln (Cologne, Germany). This association brings together the city's economic, cultural, and scientific actors and seeks to promote the city. It is made up of private members and aims to create connections between politics, the administration, residents, and tourists.

The literature on place branding and marketing has as yet paid little attention to the points set out in this chapter. And yet, any place-level marketing or branding approach cannot be understood without taking into consideration factors such as the territory's specific conditions, local actors, the consistency (in terms of content and timeframe) of public policies, territorial governance, and trade-offs between established interests and power relationships. As has been emphasised by van den Berg and Braun (1999), a territory's organising capacities are crucial factors in the competition between places to attract and develop.

Notes

- 1 There are a variety of approaches to public policy, such as neo-Weberianism, which focuses on actors, structures, and administrative rules; neo-Marxism, which deals with the legitimacy of the state; theories of rational choice, which address public policies from the point of view of the benefits accruing to parties, bureaucrats, and individuals; the systemic approach; and so on (Knoepfel et al., 2015, pp. 29–31).
- 2 Also known as the “Meadows Report” from the name of two of the three authors.
- 3 www.france24.com/fr/asie-pacifique/20230111-en-pleine-tension-avec-la-chine-le-japon-signe-un-pacte-militaire-avec-le-royaume-uni (viewed on 11 April 2023).
- 4 www.euromonitor.com/press/press-releases/december-2022/euromonitor-report-reveals-worlds-top-100-city-destinations-for-2022.
- 5 One hundred ninety-two countries were represented at the most recent world's fair held in Dubai in 2020.
- 6 Here we echo one of the most famous and oft-repeated quotes relating to marketing communications: “Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted, and the trouble is I don't know which half”, spoken by Unilever founder Lord William Leverhulme, who died in 1925.
- 7 www.maltaimmigration.com/.
- 8 See, for example, the list of winners of the City Nation Place Awards 2022 (www.citynationplace.com/awards/winners) or the Place Marketing Forum Award (<http://placemarketingforum.com/place-marketing-awards>); viewed on 03.04.2023.

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3 Attractiveness



3.1 Introduction

Place attractiveness, whether expressed as such or through other concepts such as performance or prosperity, is very present in political and economic debates. Not only are economic- and tourism-promotion policies aimed at attractiveness, but so are numerous economic and trade policies that set the economic framework conditions and even certain aspects of monetary policy. For example, without explicitly saying so, US President Biden's 2023 economic plan relates directly to the country's attractiveness. Claiming to support trade while proposing measures benefiting the American economy, this policy package favours a specific place rather than enabling fair and free competition, where the most competitive companies are successful.

Attractiveness can be considered the ultimate goal of place branding and marketing, even though the concept is not always explicitly mentioned in the literature. The reason that places are promoted is to make them *attractive*, and actually *attracting*, the two terms underlying the need for both an intention (initiatives from the place authorities and stakeholders) and results (effects on target groups). Place marketing is therefore the long-term process or policy instrument consisting of different, but interrelated, activities aimed at retaining and attracting diverse target groups in or to a certain place. Place attractiveness can be understood as: 1) attracting new targets and ensuring retention (making sure that the attracted targets do not leave the place) and 2) the general concept of being attractive, generating appealing emotions and positive intentions about the place without necessarily implying a direct action, such as increasing tourism flows or (re)locations of companies. Competitiveness and attractiveness should be considered in a complementary manner: two nearby places can be very attractive without being competitors, and conversely, two other places can face attractiveness issues and compete at the same time. The attractiveness of a place is based mainly on its characteristics and the features it can develop through a marketing and branding approach. Competitiveness refers to the comparison between places, competing for global markets or specific target groups.

Whereas Chapter 2 looked at public policies and public management as entry points for addressing place branding and marketing, this chapter focuses on

attractiveness in the context of global competition between places. As two sides of the same coin, Chapter 2 highlights the public rationale and dynamics *behind* place marketing, while Chapter 3 here looks at what place marketing wants to reach as concrete *results*. The two therefore refer to the same phenomena, but with different angles. Let's take the specific example of the Oslo Opera House. It was the result of a cultural policy and an urban planning initiative, as well as an intention to create a flagship monument, a cultural and national symbol, useful for promotion (Smith and von Krogh Strand, 2011, p. 93). To study this case, we can focus on the cultural, urban, and development policies or the construction of the building as a flagship monument from a marketing point of view. However, we can also analyse the building's attractiveness from the perspective of the local population (does this new monument enhance the living environment?), tourists (does the new attraction make tourists more willing to visit the city? Are actual visit numbers increasing?), or companies (are economic actors more attracted by a city with such a monument?). This chapter first presents the importance of attractiveness for places. It then discusses the concept of competitiveness and how places are usually compared and ranked. Finally, it elaborates on the attractiveness-related issues at stake for the following target groups: companies, tourists, and residents.

3.2 Attractiveness: a major issue for places

Place attractiveness has become a major issue for public authorities. As a collective construct, places exist through their capacity to attract and generate a dynamic that is conducive to sustainable retention of the population (Poirot and Gérardin, 2010). Governments at all levels (local, regional, or national) are dependent on a certain level of attractiveness for at least three reasons: to guarantee the financing of public policies, to keep the place alive, and to envisage places' future in a strategic way, as we live in a global capitalist world.

First, attractiveness is linked to a place's ability to provide itself with the means to achieve its ambitions. To guarantee the financing of public services, governments must ensure a certain level of attractiveness regarding private and public financial flows. For example, national authorities seek to anticipate future financial developments in terms of the country's ability to meet its needs for investments and balance its books. When drawing up a budget, a subnational state in a federal system needs to analyse its strengths and weaknesses for financing itself. This requires money transfer for infrastructures, but a federated state can also use its financial room for manoeuvre for economic promotion. Local governments also need to ensure a certain fiscal balance, which depends on the wealth of its inhabitants. For example, in the Swiss context, various financial-equalisation mechanisms at the subnational and local levels exist. The main principle is that wealthier places compensate for the most vulnerable, with the principle of a common pot. However, each place is under some pressure to guarantee that revenues from taxes on peoples' incomes and companies suffice to balance the budget. Somewhat paradoxically, it means that even places led by left-wing politicians need to attract wealthier

taxpayers. This leads to a certain “pragmatism”, when such politicians find no solution other than offering tax breaks or incentives for the wealthiest, even though it is against their political agenda. The more attractive a place is, the more room for manoeuvre the politicians will have to finance policies.

Second, attractiveness is a must for a place to exist and be alive: no isolated place can offer a dynamic environment. Authorities, residents, economic actors, and civil society all seek to benefit from and contribute to bringing a place to life, with projects and events of all kinds (Arnaud et al., 2018). Moreover, the history and heritage of a place need to be promoted, seen, and experienced. This implies triggering interest about the place and attracting visitors. A place’s economic life is stimulated by interactions between both internal and external actors. As Léon and Sauvin (2010) argue, endogenous and exogenous development of a place is expressed through attractiveness. The quality of life of a place, defined by the historical, natural, and social amenities it offers, influences its capacity to attract new residents. Simultaneously, this also results partly from the place’s development capacity: for these amenities to emerge and be of high quality, a sufficiently large pool of residents must be present, use them, and hopefully make them sustainable.

Finally, attractiveness is a dynamic process that implies a long-term projection: how will the place look like in five years, a decade, or several decades? Reflecting on attractiveness represents a strategic challenge for place development. It is a question of thinking about the desired form and degree of intensity. Even more of a challenge is to design a realistic plan that matches this vision and strikes the right balance. Indeed, attractiveness must generate sufficient revenues, but without excessive negative effects, and consider the wishes and interests of the different stakeholders. In this sense, reflections around attractiveness, policy-implementation plans, and place branding and marketing are highly political.

When attractiveness is poorly managed, as sometimes shown in urban-gentrification plans, it may result in the expulsion of less affluent segments of the population from certain neighbourhoods (Keatinge and Martin, 2016) or problems of overcrowding of transport and housing infrastructures. For example, the destination of Ibiza, a victim of its success with young people, elaborated a “de-marketing” plan to increase the average age of its visitors and diversify their origin (Medway and Warnaby, 2008). Facing the overtourism issue, Barcelona, among other cities, is looking for solutions to preserve its residents’ quality of life. Recently, the Swiss village of Iseltwald (see Box 3.2), featured in a South Korean Netflix series, decided to impose fees and traffic controls to avoid being overrun by tourists. The destination only allows in pre-booked coaches that pay for reserved parking spots and imposes CHF 5 “selfie fee” on tourists (US\$ 5).

Place marketing can be considered a toolbox for attractiveness. All marketing efforts—including communication campaigns, promotional actions, implementation of concrete measures and incentives, and structural framework conditions—can therefore become strategic for the development of a place. Marketing initiatives are no longer seen exclusively under their operational dimensions but through their strategic importance for place attractiveness. They have become key in public

affairs (Houllier-Guibert, 2017). However, public managers still face the challenges listed in the following.

The first challenge relates to the transversality of attractiveness strategies. Generally speaking, they are all encompassing regarding the actors and sectors they involve, they look for coherence and optimisation of the available financial and human resources, they want to deliver the best results for targeted groups, and they pay much attention to improving the general image of the place. Any initiative aiming at an effect regarding attractiveness will involve different policies and complex, multi-level governance (Pasquinelli and Vuignier, 2020). As places and their sub-entities are simultaneously cooperating and competing at different levels, this leads to new intertwined dynamics and changing coalitions. For example, networks of global cities demonstrate the growing power of subnational entities that weave relationships at a global level, independently of and sometimes differently from the national level (Rozenblat et al., 2017).

The second challenge relates to the combination of multiple factors capable of satisfying the main target groups: residents, tourists, and companies/investors. This combination transcends the various categories of people and organisations that ordinarily benefit from public policies and services. In comparison with traditional policies, public managers involved in attractiveness efforts, be it as a priority or as a task aside, must learn new concepts, develop new skills, and engage with numerous stakeholders. More than that, they must understand the needs and drivers of potential future stakeholders.

The third challenge points to the definition of the “relevant” place’s boundaries. Going beyond established institutional boundaries, the phenomenon of attractiveness leads to a search for the “appropriate” perimeter from a target group’s perspective. The resident-user, the citizen-taxpayer, and the tourist-visitor see the place differently. Therefore, the question of financing an attractiveness strategy can be seen in a different light, according to the group considered: is it exclusively financed by public entities and therefore dependent on them? If so, how are projects that expand beyond the institutional borders (e.g., the limits of a municipality, province, or country) to be financed? Is it relevant to adopt a project-based financing logic at the risk of harming the cohesion and sustainability of the traditional financial approach?

In most place-marketing practices, public authorities remain the leading actors. In France, for example, the most recent territorial reform led to an upheaval with respect to the budgets of attractiveness strategies: suddenly, by a top-down decision, the financial flow from the central government supporting attractiveness-related activities changed and was disbursed along new territorial perimeters (Rochette et al., 2019). Public–private partnerships are also being formed, tapping into both private and public funds for attractiveness-related initiatives, which tend to be co-designed and co-steered. Private companies’ desire to invest in attractiveness can be motivated by willingness to contribute to the place’s development, without any specific aims (such as corporate social responsibility), or it can be connected to strategic objectives, such as attracting talents and managers. Again, depending on the exact initiative, the delimitation of the place promoted varies. This adds up to

the challenge of engaging with private actors. While it remains complex to calculate the return on investment of any attractiveness-related activities (especially *ex ante*), it is equally complex to anticipate in which perimeters the results will materialise.

An additional challenge relates to the fact that attractiveness dynamics are constantly evolving. Authors argue that, as a result, a new place marketing was born in the past few years (Gayet, 2017). We partly disagree with this assertion, since we lack empirical evidence, and we do not want to exaggerate the recency of place-marketing issues. When the Norwegian explorer Erik Le Rouge in the 10th century named a place that was essentially composed of ice “Grønland” (green land) to attract settlers, was this not already a form of place branding? And the emergence of a strategic reflection on attractiveness? Nonetheless, such an assertion is good enough to underline the existence of new challenges, for example, new behaviours of target groups, new technologies, or new global flows and mobility.

These challenges have developed in parallel with evolutionary perceptions and conceptions of attractiveness in recent years. A short-term view that is not embedded in strategic land-development planning has shown its limitations. As Osgood et al. (2012) explain, it is no longer enough to convince targets to come through incentives that cannot last. A viable business model has to be found for place development. Although the funding of some offerings could be posted to a budget line for “client acquisition”, in this case the acquisition of target groups, they should be realistically compensated in the long term. For example, tax breaks can serve to attract groups but should be part of a complete, balanced tax-incentive mechanism, with realistic projections.

Also, attractiveness is not merely a matter of attracting with offerings but increasingly of retaining target groups and making them develop in harmony with the community. For instance, endogenous economic promotion is becoming highly important, since the potential added value brought to a place’s economy by existing local companies can be greater than that from companies targeted abroad. The same can be true for tourism, since residents or tourists from nearby places can spend more than tourists attracted from far away. For example, destinations such as the Greek island of Corfu are seeing the limits of cruise tourism regarding place development. They therefore want to diversify their attractiveness through slow and sustainable tourism but also through an attempt to retain and attract residents. For this purpose, capitalising on the island’s current residents is regarded as key. Promotion campaigns could therefore be primarily targeted at locals.

Logically, then, the purchasing power of targeted tourists is analysed, as well as the ability of potential residents to integrate, contribute to taxes, and constitute a strategically relevant workforce (Khamadieva, 2015). As for companies (existing and potential), indicators such as the type of jobs created, their added value for the economy and for the place, and their potential qualitative and quantitative evolution over time are scrutinised. The result is fierce competition to attract innovative companies (the greatest added value for the economy) that fit with the context (greatest added value for the place). This fosters the competition to develop place-based innovation clusters in many areas (OECD, 2022a).

3.3 Place-based attractiveness policies and clusters

Léon and Sauvin (2010) argue that new attractiveness policies should move away from an a-territorial, predominantly financial logic of attractiveness with no integration into the local productive system. This narrow perspective limits places to “blocks of factors”. What should be promoted instead is an approach to place-development projects that bring together local players and look attractive to businesses. The close relationship between companies and a place’s endogenous development is therefore essential.

Attractiveness policies increasingly seek to support the emergence of business clusters and create the conditions necessary to turn the attraction of one company into attracting businesses of an entire sector. As a result, clusters are considered a source of inspiration for developing place attractiveness. Clusters are

geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (e.g., universities, standards agencies, trade associations) in a particular field that compete but also cooperate. . . . A cluster is a geographically proximate group of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities. The geographic scope of clusters ranges from a region, a state, or even a single city to span nearby or neighbouring countries (e.g., southern Germany and German-speaking Switzerland). The geographic scope of a cluster relates to the distance over which informational, transactional, incentive, and other efficiencies occur.

(Porter, 2000, pp. 15–16)

The focus on clusters aims to give rise to networks of organisations, which are coordinated groups of “heterogeneous, geographically close actors who cooperate and participate collectively in a material (goods and/or services) and/or immaterial (knowledge, image) production process” (Ehlinger and Perret, 2009, p. 32). Other terms refer to comparable dynamics: industrial districts, technopoles, local production systems, innovative environments, learning regions, and so on (Le Gall, 2009). From the search for a geographical distribution of companies to ensure balanced economic development between regions and a certain equity between political–institutional constituencies, we have witnessed a shift to specialised, sectoral place development based on comparative advantages, enabling the development of business clusters (Bradford and Wolfe, 2013).

Moreover, tensions between the local and the global arise from the consequences of “bad attractiveness” or excessive attractiveness in certain cases. These can be just as dramatic as non-attractiveness, because the targets are mobile and operate transnationally in a “shrinking international space” (De Senarclens, 2005, p. 65). If companies are attracted but do not anchor themselves in the place, they may leave quickly, as illustrated by numerous cases of company relocations, including firms whose productivity is nevertheless appreciable (Serval, 2017). In addition, poorly managed attractiveness can undermine societal equilibrium. For example,

the massive urbanisation of certain regions brings its own set of challenges not only in terms of transport and housing infrastructure but also in terms of social and health systems. The phenomenon of the digitalisation of society also gives cause to rethink attractiveness policies, since they can significantly affect a place's economic and societal evolution.

Competitiveness brings a place into the environment in which it evolves: among other places that are in co-opetition, that is, in cooperation and/or in competition. The focus is therefore not on what the place has to offer in absolute terms but what it offers in comparison with others in the context of global markets. As Braun (2008) underlines, with place marketing, places act like companies, which adopt marketing strategies to safeguard their business in a dynamic and competitive environment. For places, the competition is both intraregional and among regions, especially urban regions, but also at the country level, especially for states that have economic leverage and strong comparative advantages, as presented in Box 3.1.

Box 3.1 The competitiveness of countries: fusion interactions between competitive advantages of firms and comparative advantages of locations

Several institutions, such as the World Economic Forum (WEF), the International Institute of Management Development (IMD), and the World Bank (WB), publish rankings of countries according to their competitiveness. These rankings, based on many indicators, reflect the economic health of countries and may have an impact on their attractiveness. According to the WEF, competitiveness of a location can be defined as “the set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country” (World Economic Forum, 2015, p. 5). This definition is in line with Michael Porter's approach that a national economy is competitive when firms operating there can achieve a high level of productivity (Porter, 2008, p. 176). As noted by Porter,

in this broader and more dynamic view of competition, location affects competitive advantage through its influence on productivity and especially on productivity growth. . . . Prosperity depends on the productivity with which factors are used and upgraded in a particular location.
(1998, p. 9)

Place competitiveness is a major subject of most economic theories and their evolution over time. As noted by Gugler,

The higher the competitiveness of a location is, the more attractive it is as a business location. The attractiveness of a specific location will induce a concentration of enterprises and therefore economic activities

within its boundaries. Domestic firms will grow, new firms will be created, and foreign firms will invest in the location.

(2018, p. 441)

The competitiveness of a specific location is the subject of particular attention in the theory of economic geography approach as well as of the international business (IB) studies. Indeed, multinational enterprises (MNEs) operate their value-added activities abroad according to the attractiveness of the recipient countries (Dunning and Gugler, 2008). In IB theory, the role of location was highlighted, *inter alia*, by John Dunning (1981), who presented the OLI paradigm in the late 1970s. According to Dunning (2009), the role of location (L) is one of the three pillars that explain why a company chooses to operate some or all of its activities at a specific location. Indeed, “the L-advantages reflects the ‘assets’ offered by the recipient country, explaining why a specific firm decides to invest in a specific host location” (Gugler, 2018, p. 442). The attractiveness of a country depends on the reasons for which a particular country meets the criteria for establishing a company, that is, “resources seekers”, “efficiency seekers”, “markets seekers”, and “strategic assets seekers”. The authors explored the key competitive advantages of locations in order to understand the key assets that drive business choice. These reflections emanate not only from the IB field but also from the theoretical developments of the economic agglomerations from Marshall to Porter. According to Porter, “ultimately, nations succeed in particular industries because their home environment is the most forward-looking, dynamic and challenging” (2008, p. 171). Porter’s framework analyses the quality of a business environment according to four components: the “factor conditions”, the “degree of competition”, the “presence of related and supporting industries” as well as the “demand conditions” (2008).

The role of clusters served as a bridge between the theories of the IB and that of economic geography:

the ease at which MNEs can transfer intangible assets across national boundaries is being constrained by the fact that the location of the creation and use of these assets is becoming increasingly influenced by the presence of immobile clusters of complementary value-added activities.

(Dunning, 2009, pp. 7–10)

A cluster reflects the geographical concentration of interconnected complementary and competitive activities (Porter, 2008, p. 215). Due to the specialisation and concentration of specific activities within clusters, clusters confer unique advantages on the regions in which these clusters operate.

Studies on MNEs’ strategies and competitive advantages have shown that the competitive advantages of the home country as well as of the host

countries explain the localisation of specific activities of the value chain. A country can't be competitive for all activities of a firm's value chain. Unique value propositions of countries offering the best environment for specific activities of the value chain reinforce their attractiveness and prosperity. As highlighted by Gugler et al.,

As a result of their ability to supersede the market and internalise the benefits of the geographic distribution of their activities, multinational enterprises (MNEs) have distributed their value chain around the world and implemented a global network of subsidiaries that allow them to take advantage of the specific profile of different environment.

(Gugler et al., 2015, p. 324; Gugler, 2018, p. 446)

The above developments show that the attractiveness of a location does not depend on general and common factors such as all size fits all. The competitiveness of a particular firm depends on its suitability with the comparative advantages of its location. The interaction between firm-specific advantages (FSAs) and country-specific advantages (CSAs) has been developed by Rugman in particular (2008, p. 13). Strong CSAs determine the ability of a location to offer the best business environment according to the FSAs. The attractiveness of a specific location is particularly strong when it generates "location bound FSAs" (Rugman, 2008).

Box written by Philippe Gugler.

Place competitiveness can be defined as the ability of a place to deliver beyond-GDP¹ goals for its citizens (Aiginger et al., 2013). The authors of this definition intend to avoid the misuse of the term in the narrow sense of price (cost) competitiveness, which has led to the foregone conclusion that wages, taxes, or energy costs should be reduced. This is encompassed in the idea of a "low road to competitiveness", which alludes to the zero-sum game imposed by the global capitalist system, where individuals and places enrich themselves only by impoverishing others. In contrast, the "high road to competitiveness" focuses on productivity and capabilities as determinants of long-term economic success. It would therefore aim at enhancing the socio-economic system as a whole and push for technology-based and ecological measures (Aiginger et al., 2013). This approach considers added value through regional specificities, their cooperation, and innovation the way to go beyond the zero-sum game. As Audretsch et al. (2017, p. 519) highlight, "there is no one formula for regional competitiveness . . . each region must capitalize on its unique strengths and pursue strategies that enhance and amplify these advantages".

As explained, attractiveness policies foster the development of clusters. Thus, a spiral effect, a form of virtuous circle of attractiveness, contributes to combining in the same place the presence of companies and training centres, as well as public

and private research units engaged in a partnership approach, designed to generate synergies around innovative projects (Gaschet and Lacour, 2007). The presence of many companies in a place is thus often considered a factor of attractiveness itself. In this sense, a company would be attracted by the presence of other companies in the same sector or domain, because they can depend on each other (e.g., for subcontracting, production, partnerships, networks, dissemination of know-how, workforce skills, etc.). An attractive region for companies can contribute to an attractive ecosystem, which means not only attracting companies but also talents and workforce. A rich place offering may end up creating an attractive place for tourism and residents too.

In this regard, places are constantly compared and ranked, as mentioned by Gugler in Box 3.1. When they obtain a good score, places can use it as a message for communication. As a recent example, the city of Basel, Switzerland, was pleased to announce that it is “still the most attractive city for business in Europe”, based on the European Cities and Regions of the Future 2023 review (part of the *Financial Times*). It uses this ranking to assess the most attractive locations for foreign direct investment (FDI). Information was collected and assessed for a total of 549 locations in five different categories: economic potential, human capital and lifestyle, cost effectiveness, connectivity, and business friendliness.² When a place obtains a low score, it may still be a good way for the place authorities and stakeholders to learn about the place’s weaknesses and see how to improve its attractiveness.

There is a plethora of rankings, some developed by business schools (e.g., IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook), some by international bodies (e.g., WEF Global Competitiveness Report), consultancy firms (e.g., Mercer’s Quality of Living City Ranking, EY Attractiveness surveys or the Saffron’s Tourism City Brand Barometer), or news agencies (e.g., Benchmark from fDi Intelligence, a service from the *Financial Times*). An assessment of the various rankings shows that the level of detail provided is generally limited. We could even assume that, in certain cases, some rankings aim to raise interest, so the consulting company behind the ranking can be hired for an advisory mandate. The ranking would thus work as a “buying incentive”.

As mentioned, attractiveness can be addressed in terms of both declared intentions (expressed through strategy and political will) and results (through facts and analysis from the point of view of a region’s competitiveness). The idea is to find ways of distinguishing, differentiating, and enhancing the perception (through identity, image, and reputation) and the reality (through competitive and concrete place offerings) of a place. This is where branding and marketing come into the discussion. Before focusing, in Chapter 4, on these two concepts, which are the essence of the book, it seems important to present the dynamics of attractiveness for each of the three main target groups, which are companies (and investors), tourists (business and leisure), and residents. We add a fourth group that includes opinion leaders and decision-makers. However, we will not present this category in much detail here, as it relates more to image, reputation, and influence rather than direct attractiveness.

3.4 Attractiveness for companies and investment

Attractiveness for companies and investors, also called economic attractiveness, matters enormously for places, since it provides jobs, fosters growth, and, more generally, boosts economic development. As a general target group, this category encompasses all types of businesses. Any attractiveness strategy devoted to this group will therefore be dense, including systemic aspects or framework conditions and various instruments, including incentives. Places therefore often launch economic-promotion campaigns. It consists also in capitalising on the existing companies active in the place, ensuring that they keep their activities on-site (retention marketing), and fostering them to attract new ones. In this vein, the promotion of attractive ecosystems has flourished. In the following, we define place attractiveness for companies and investors in more detail.

Addressing place attractiveness for companies from the perspective of place branding implies focusing on the aspects of the place that influence companies' location behaviour, that is, their process of deciding to set up, relocate, or expand. This process includes both factors internal to the firm and its sector of activity and external factors (Persillet and Shonkwiler, 2014). It is therefore necessary to set aside the many factors that come into play but do not directly concern the place, particularly those that relate to company management. Many authors or schools have focused on corporate internationalisation decisions and have developed models, such as the Uppsala model, according to which a multinational company "evolves through ongoing internationalization processes by proactively and entrepreneurially engaging in business exchange rather than production" (Coviello et al., 2017, p. 1151). These models include Dunning's (1980) eclectic ownership location internalisation (OLI) paradigm, as discussed by Gugler in Box 3.1. It states that a firm, especially a multinational one, with a specific advantage and an advantage to internalisation, will choose a location provided that the place can make it acquire other advantage. This model was later revised so that firms no longer seek "only to exploit a specific advantage held *ex ante* but to create new strategic assets *ex post* by developing links with actors in the location" (Le Gall, 2009, p. 53).

The complexity of the concept of place attractiveness is illustrated by Serval (2017), who offers a detailed, multidisciplinary analysis of the phenomenon of place anchoring of firms. To do so, she combines the approaches of the proximity school, analysis in terms of global value chains (GVCs), and the study of headquarters–subsidiary relations with a neo-institutional point of view on companies' decisions to locate and stay in a place. Le Gall (2011) has carried out a synthesis of the existing research on such decisions. He shows that it is difficult to isolate the determinants of choice that are linked to the place from those specific to the company. Indeed, the reality of the phenomenon is complex, its appreciation influenced by the subjective and self-interested visions of managers, and the theoretical distinction varies greatly depending on the approach preferred by researchers. Moreover, in analysing place anchoring, several authors demonstrate a dynamic interaction between a place and a company over time (Sergot, 2004; Zimmermann, 2005). This interaction allows businesses not only to mobilise existing place resources but

also to develop resources not held prior to their location that contribute to their own competitiveness (Dunning and Lundan, 2008).

Then, the focus shifted: the priority was no longer attracting multiple companies but opting for quality by analysing potential multiplier factors. Economic promoters thus adopted indicators such as the type of jobs created, their added value, and the potential qualitative and quantitative evolution over time in a specific place context, with great importance attributed to innovation (OECD, 2022b). For example, the New Regional Policy designed by the Swiss Confederation points to the same direction. It encourages sub-national entities to develop projects with a strong economic character, regional innovation systems, for example, which go beyond official institutional borders, with the dual objective of reducing disparities and increasing economic development.

The relation between companies and places is therefore complex. The phenomenon of attractiveness can nevertheless be approached in light of a simplified reading of the process of choosing a location. Drawing on previous authors and existing professional reports (Balderjahn, 2014), it is possible to schematise this process in different phases. First, the company conducts a pre-selection of a large number of potential locations. This involves the creation of a database listing the territories that roughly meet the company's requirements and needs and their respective characteristics (longlist). The company then defines evaluation criteria and analyses the territories on this list. Then, it selects a limited number of sites that best meet the defined criteria (shortlist). Finally, the company gets in touch with the people in charge of these territories. In these last phases, a discussion, or even a form of negotiation, may take place between the company and officials of the potential host territory. The key steps can be summarised in different stages (Wardle and Harris, 2017):

- 1) Awareness: a place could be an interesting location for the company;
- 2) Understanding: gathering of information about the conditions offered;
- 3) Investigation: analysis of these conditions compared to other possibilities;
- 4) Investment: decision to locate or invest.

The different stages of the process are marked by a multiplicity of factors. In addition to factors internal to the company and inherent to the way decisions are made, it is possible to list the factors of place attractiveness. The scientific literature and reports by consultancy firms focusing on this decision-making process tend to prefer a rational logic of measurable criteria (MacCarthy and Atthirawong, 2003). These are “hard”, objective factors and “soft”, subjective factors, a distinction relativised by Giovanardi (2012), who insists on their hybridity.

Researchers and practitioners also emphasise the importance of the “framework conditions” offered to firms. They refer to the basic terms and conditions set by the state that influence the economic, social, and political context in which business activities are conducted (tax system, stability, functioning of institutions, etc.). They tend to be understood as the set of measures put in place by public authorities that can influence the attractiveness of the territory in which companies operate.

They encompass a variety of public policies, including land-use planning (zoning plans), health, and education. Therefore, they involve multiple sectoral public policies at several levels. Moreover, through the concept of place anchoring, Serval (2017) invites us to think not in terms of location factors but in terms of territorialisation factors.

Among the factors identified, fiscal aspects have been much discussed and are a relatively important factor to consider. It is common to consider the fact of offering tax advantages as an important, even preponderant, factor for a territory to convince a company to locate. Companies often seek to optimise their tax situation and places to develop attractive tax offers, which can result in very complex, and opaque, mechanisms. However, there is no consensus on the effect of taxation on the choice of location or on the attraction of FDI. Some authors attribute significant weight to it, with technical and targeted econometric studies that analyse, for example, the impact of various taxes levied on companies and their employees on the location of company headquarters (Bösenberg et al., 2014; Egger et al., 2013). Others attest that there is no evidence that the tax factor plays a significant role, such as the article by Tavares-Lehmann et al. (2012), which is based on a very broad literature review.

The existence of various lists of attractiveness factors highlights their wide diversity. The polysemy of many notions, and the overlap of some definitions, make drawing up a summary complicated. In any case, such an exercise brings its share of criticism, which in turn justifies a new draft, thus perpetuating the multiplication of indicators that can be used. Nevertheless, we propose a list (Table 3.1) which, among the determining factors for companies, distinguishes the conditions offered, and the economic context, from the general business environment offered by places.

Having elaborated on the notion of place attractiveness for companies, it is interesting to present how place-branding and -marketing efforts interplay with it.

Table 3.1 Summary of key place attractiveness factors for companies

<i>Attractiveness factors</i>	
Framework conditions and economic context	Output market potential
	Presence of a cluster and appropriate suppliers
	Intellectual property protection
	Infrastructures: transport, telecommunication, and logistics
	Availability and price of commercial and industrial property
	Quality of workforce: flexibility of labour law
	Corporate tax and costs
	Quality of education and favourable environment for research, development, and innovation
General environment	Social climate and political stability
	Safety
	Quality of life

Source: Vuignier (2018)

In general terms, marketing and place branding aim at fostering economic development. The place characteristics nicely packaged and the messages on place brands are therefore expected to influence decisions of investors and companies to locate in a place and not leave. However, while it is easy to assume that an abstract role is played by the brand, few empirical studies have so far demonstrated an effect, as underlined by Gertner (2011) and Hankinson (2010). Nevertheless, evidence has shown the complexity of the relationships between place-branding processes, attractiveness factors, and decision making regarding companies' (re)locating in a given place. This ambiguity is illustrated by Bergqvist (2009), who shows that the intangible dimensions of attractiveness are only activated when a place-branding strategy is accompanied by a concrete offer, based on a competitive advantage for specific target groups.

Several studies have investigated the relationships between place branding and companies' or investors' decisions to locate or relocate in a place (e.g., van de Laar and de Neubourg, 2006; Wilson et al., 2014; Bose et al., 2016; Papadopoulos et al., 2016). Interestingly, Jacobsen (2012) designed and tested a theoretical model called "investor-based place brand equity". He showed that the place brand can play a role at two different phases in choosing a business location: at the initial stage when the reputation of the place is important and at the selection stage. He indicated that the place brand has the highest potential for differentiation during the initial phase. Building on the existing literature and models analysing the complex relationship between place brands and attractiveness factors, Vuignier (2018) showed that the place brand tends to have a summary-construct effect on business decision makers regarding company location and relocation. It means that the place brand synthesises information in the decision maker's mind. Rather than act as a halo effect (an unconscious bias triggered by the brand), the place brand summarises factors that have consciously been examined by the company's decision makers or advisors, who tend to associate the place brand with the attractiveness factors deemed most important. For example, once a place has been analysed and deemed attractive for its economic and tax policies, the business decision maker relies consciously on the place brand for this factor without having to examine it again. In this sense, the brand acts as a shortcut during the place-selection process.

3.5 Attractiveness for visitors

A second target group of crucial importance for places is tourists, be it for leisure or business. In certain areas, the share of tourism in regional or even national GDP is extremely significant. According to the World Bank, in 2019,

tourism was the world's largest service sector—providing one in ten jobs worldwide, almost seven percent of all international trade and 25 percent of the world's service exports—a critical foreign exchange generator . . . the sector was valued at more than US\$ 9 trillion and accounted for 10.4 percent of global GDP.³

In countries such as Greece, tourists were three times more numerous than the population in 2019, generating more than 20% of the country's GDP. This dependence on tourism is especially marked in countries where jobs depend mostly on visitors. This is typically the case in South Asia: Bangladesh has a ratio of nine jobs per tourist, India and Pakistan a ratio of two jobs per tourist. On other continents, countries such as Venezuela, Ethiopia, and the Philippines also rely quite heavily on tourism, with one job per tourist on average,⁴ although current crises are severely affecting the sector. Tourism thus has a great impact on places' employment, transport, finances, and culture. This calls for the coordination of public policies governing these various areas, as advocated in our book.

The economic potential of tourism forms the subject of detailed studies focusing on particular sub-sectors or types of tourism. For example, Bowtell (2015) considers that an accessible tourism market is a distinct sector, possessing the capacity for extensive future growth, and thus presents major travel providers with a substantial and lucrative market, generating potential revenues of € 88.6 billion by 2025. On the basis of studies of this kind, tourism often appears to be an interesting vector for development. Since it does not require too much infrastructure from the outset, a place can develop gradually, starting with adventurers and then moving on to the general public, and later on develop tourism niches, even if the reality is not so precisely linear. Tourism offerings will both depend on and contribute to a place's general economic development.

Studies on tourism attractiveness can be split into two categories. Whereas the first focuses on attractiveness factors, the second includes contributions that relate to particular forms of tourism, as mentioned previously. This points to the diversity of the tourism sector, which can rely on various resources to increase the attractiveness of a place for visitors (Krabokoukis and Polyzos, 2021). A place can, for example, capitalise on national parks, forests, archaeological sites, or specific types of tourism, such as medical or educational. In general, research is characterised by multiple approaches in diverse case studies, which directly result from the multidimensionality of tourism, its complex portfolio of services, and the variety of the existing attractiveness factors. For instance, several contributions have shown the impact of world heritage sites (WHSs), especially in Italy and Spain. The empirical analysis from Castillo-Manzano et al. (2021, p. 310) shows that "although UNESCO's WHS brand is not primarily designed for promoting tourism, it does play a role as a driver of tourist attraction".

Research has shown that most attractiveness factors listed in the literature and usually used as key elements in destination branding do play a role (Castillo-Manzano et al., 2021). These factors include accommodation and transport infrastructure, gastronomy, arts and culture, and climatic and geographical factors. Recommendations for policy-makers usually focus on the improvement of service quality and better accessibility of sites: efforts in this sense should be made by both public and private operators. Regarding heritage-preservation policies, recommendations typically emphasise the need to promote larger areas and better coordinate the offerings among the various visitors' sites.

As a target group, tourists are characterised by *mobility* and *non-exclusivity*. Mobility is an essential aspect, because a visitor can stay from one night to a month or more. The possibilities of working remotely have even given rise to “digital nomads” that a place can seek to attract, which implies the need to develop new place offerings. Non-exclusivity is also central, because visiting a place does not mean that a tourist cannot visit another one. Certainly not at exactly the same time, but a visit to one place does not exclude a visit to another, unlike a business that sets up in one place or a resident who lives in another. Related to this, the tourism sector is somewhat volatile, in the sense that the choice to visit is rarely a long-term commitment.

This volatility was demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, which turned the sector completely upside down. The most vulnerable players were particularly hard hit, as state aid was lacking in many tourism-dependent countries. For privileged countries, however, the pandemic put the sector to the test. Travel possibilities were stopped. Tourism promotion agencies had therefore to be creative and advertise, knowing that the possible success of the campaign in terms of attractiveness would not come in the short run. The key expression, used by several agencies, including the Norwegian, Swiss, and Indonesian tourism bodies, was: “Dream now, visit later” (Wijaya Murti et al., 2023).⁵

At the local level, campaigns were launched in 2021 and 2022 to encourage people to reinvest in city centres. In London, for instance, the mayor recognised that the city centre was the heart of the UK’s economy in many sectors. A domestic-tourism campaign was run in 2021 to ensure the survival of the main cultural and hospitality venues. Ideas were shared with mayors from Berlin and Paris about “building back better” after the pandemic and working with the business community to encourage people to come back to the British capital. Financed by Glasgow City Council, through the Scottish Government’s City Centre Recovery Fund, the 2022 #LoveGlasgow campaign aimed at stimulating the visitor economy. Melbourne launched the \$ 4 million “Only in the City” marketing campaign to boost the economy by supporting thousands of jobs in the food, retail, fashion, entertainment, and art sectors. Another example is the “Always San Francisco” campaign, launched by the city’s authorities and spearheaded by the tourism bureau in 2023. The main goal was to rebound after the pandemic but also to improve perceptions, as the city is suffering from a policy and image crisis related to crime, drug addiction, and homelessness.

Another particularity of tourism is that the target group of visitors is very broad: it ranges from leisure to business, and this spectrum includes short- and long-term trips, exhibition visitors, industrial tourism (Lee, 2016), and so on. As we will see in Chapter 13, dedicated to place-branding strategies, and Chapter 14, on strategy monitoring and evaluation, defining sub-target groups according to their characteristics and behaviour is essential. As far as tourism is concerned, the kind of tourism (and therefore the types of tourists) targeted will be key. Will the place prefer mass tourism? Boutique tourism? Sustainable tourism? A heterogeneous balance? Asking these questions, looking for data, setting up forums for collective debate, and

then strategically considering the answers to them are among the steps that will be presented in detail in Part IV of this book. Place-branding considerations should also be included in the strategic reflection about place development. While the kind of tourism and visitors should be clearly defined, social, economic, and cultural policies should be aligned with the choice made. The place-branding efforts should then consider these policy orientations and include them in the branding process. In addition, the development of digital technologies has raised the importance of online reviews on travel-community websites and both user-generated and booking platforms. These elements should also be integrated in the destination branding as well (Kavaratzis, 2017).

Although visiting a place can encompass many realities, contributions on the subject often make a distinction between leisure (taking a break from daily routine activities, for example, holidays, social and cultural tours, etc.) and business tourism (people travelling for business meetings and conferences). Regarding positioning, places can prefer one kind of tourism or, especially in the case of large cities and regions, combine the two. As far as business tourism is concerned, many cities tend to promote, and sometimes brand, themselves as meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) destinations. The MICE industry size is very large, valued at US\$ 345.8 billion in 2021.⁶ Every year, travel prizes are awarded to the best destinations, including MICE ones. This tourism segment matters significantly for certain cities, such as Madrid, where it accounted for 13.7% of all tourism in 2019, according to figures provided by the Madrid Convention Bureau.⁷

In terms of structure, a variety of organisations or agencies play a great role in many cities and regions, covering all aspects, ranging from leisure visitors (providing information on museums, gastronomy, one-day trips, cultural events, etc.) to business tourism (conferences and meetings) and investment opportunities (business sectors, clusters, connectivity, etc.). For example, in Leicester (UK), Visit Leicester is the city and county's official tourism website. The website contains information for all visitors, with tabs dedicated to "visit" (leisure), "meet" (business), "invest", and even "live". The attractiveness factors listed in the literature typically include the necessary infrastructure, suitable weather conditions, transport, safety, high-quality services, a good health environment, and so on. Academic contributions have focused more on leisure tourism, treating places and their related brands as visitor destinations (Hankinson, 2005). However, for the reasons mentioned, considering business tourism is significantly important for certain places. In this regard, it is essential to develop the adequate infrastructure but also to pay close attention to ambience attributes, as both elements contribute to reinforcing a place's attractiveness.

The level of place promoted is another important element to address. For example, while France as a destination is promoted to foreign tourists, French regions are competing against each other. Then, while an entire region is promoted for tourism, within a region, each place will be keen to highlight its specific destination and tourism activities. The tourism territory will not necessarily be the economic or residential territory but will correspond to a place whose identity can be promoted in a harmonised way and with a corresponding tourism offering. The alignment or

discrepancy between the ambition to welcome tourists and the actual capacity to offer the promised and advertised experience will often be decisive for places. In this regard, Ooi and Stöber (2010) add that “touristification” of places may reduce the authenticity of their famous areas and local products.

In terms of place-brand strength, Burgundy is an interesting example. It is the Burgundy brand that is in the spotlight, offering a vast tourist area and numerous possibilities for discoveries and culinary experiences. When it comes to wine, however, wine lovers may argue that the best bottles are not those sold under the region’s brand name but those with the name of the village (*appellation village*) and, for *Premier Cru* and *Grand Cru* wines, the name of the very parcel of land the grapes come from. It is as if the Burgundy brand, so well known in the wine world, no longer needed to be promoted directly under its own name to exist. The strength of a brand name can also lead to paradoxical situations. Here are two examples from the world of cinema. Tuscany is a strong place brand. In American films, the mention of Tuscany conjures up dreams and alludes directly to a certain lifestyle and atmosphere. As a much sought-after film destination, filming there has become expensive. Other cost-competitive destinations similar to Tuscany in terms of landscapes and atmosphere have then offered good alternatives to film-makers. This is the case of Istria, a European peninsula whose largest portion lies in Croatia, which appears in several films supposedly set in Tuscany. Paradoxically, unless word gets out, Istria is helping to reinforce the Tuscany brand by showcasing its beautiful landscapes. Similarly, Toronto is often used to represent New York City.

Finally, a recurring theme: the importance of local communities in tourism. It relates to the same phenomenon explained previously for companies: places aim for quality of the target, putting the emphasis on their contribution to the local economy. The concept of community-based tourism underlines, for instance, the local anchoring of tourism activities that will benefit locals rather than large hotel groups or tour operators. Leal et al. (2022) analyse the role of local communities in tourism and demonstrate the importance of involving them in all stages, from developing the place offering to welcoming tourists. Morgan et al. (2011, p. 17) mention in this vein that communities must take part in the reflection on the kind of tourism industry they want: “Do they see tourism as important in their development? If so, how will they project their traditions and culture to the outside world? Who will have the authority to tell their stories, whose narratives will be told, and whose will be excluded?”

Among countries that invest massively in tourism but do not necessarily involve the local population, Rwanda has made a name for itself by putting the words “Visit Rwanda” on the soccer shirts of Arsenal, one of the world’s richest clubs (Voets, 2023). This campaign is part of a wider initiative entitled Nation Branding Strategy Development and Implementation, which aims to improve Rwanda’s competitiveness and is said to be funded in part by official development assistance. This campaign was strongly criticised:

the decision to spend \$ 40m on the advertising deal has been questioned, given that foreign aid still accounts for 17 percent of Rwanda’s national

budget. With 60 percent of the country's citizens living in extreme poverty, expensive advertisements in magazines and on soccer kits will always be subject to critique.⁸

One of the main risks of excluding the local population, coupled with the public authorities' decision to encourage mass tourism, or at least when they fail to take measures to avoid overcrowding of places, is discontent and protests. Among the main effects of overtourism are, of course, traffic congestion and pollution. However, a recent problematic phenomenon involves the expulsion of the local population from city centres. This is the result of higher rents, which themselves result from expanding private holiday rentals offerings, triggering protests in many cities, including Belfast, Dublin, Edinburgh, New York City, Mexico City, and San Francisco. In Florence, Italy, a ban on new short-term private holiday rentals (including Airbnb listings) in the historic centre was announced in 2023.

As mentioned in the first part of this chapter, the effects of overtourism can significantly damage a place. In this regard, the example of the Swiss village of Iseltwald is further detailed in Box 3.2.

Box 3.2 The case of Iseltwald, Switzerland

The attractiveness of places can sometimes benefit from so-called “screen tourism”, as in the case of Birmingham, the second-largest city in the UK. There, fans of the “Peaky Blinders” series visited the city during their holidays, fuelling a record number of visits to the area in the last few years. A similar phenomenon occurred in other places, such as Dubrovnik in Croatia, following the release of the “Game of Thrones” series.

The main downside of this “screen tourism” is the potential for overtourism, when too many people come, which can increase pollution, destroy nature, and create distress among the local population. This is not completely new: Maya Bay, Thailand, experienced the influx of hordes of tourists after the film “The Beach” was shot there in 2000. Many places are facing the problem of overtourism. Books, detective series, films, and so on set in these places attract large flows of tourists that are either unwanted or too big for the existing infrastructure. This is the case of Iseltwald, Switzerland.

Iseltwald is a small village of 400 inhabitants located on the shores of Lake Brienz. Since the South Korean series “Crash Landing on You”, which can be seen on the Netflix platform, filmed a romantic scene on a small wooden jetty, the place has been invaded by tourists. In summer and winter alike, dozens of buses unload tourists who come here to take photos and selfies. The public transport operator, CarPostal, had to considerably reinforce its offering, and a turnstile (CHF 5) was installed to regulate the number of people on the small wooden structure.



© Alex, La Liberté

Figure 3.1 Iseltwald and overtourism

Source: “Do you see this famous pontoon?!” (Drawing by Alex Ballaman reproduced with his kind permission). ©Alex Ballaman (La Liberté)

3.6 Attractiveness for residents

Attracting residents is vital for places. By definition, a place without inhabitants is not a place. For decades, rural exodus, shrinking cities, and brain drain have been observed in many places. These phenomena have been addressed in various research fields (economics, geography, sociology, etc.). Niedomysl (2007) explains, for example, that many Swedish municipalities experienced significant population declines by the end of the 20th century. According to Eimermann (2013, p. 198),

less obviously attractive rural areas in Europe are facing challenges of depopulation and economic stagnation. A scenario in which Europe will have lost 50 million of its current population by the year 2050 may lead to socio-demographic challenges in almost a third of Europe’s regions.

Rural municipalities have tried to fix the problem, sometimes using marketing campaigns to attract residents. Yet these phenomena are still challenging for many

public authorities. Some design strategies to remain competitive, as highlighted by Dragin-Jensen et al. (2018, p. 55):

urban planners are using a wide array of strategies to ensure that their cities remain an attractive place to live and work in and a potential location to move to since they have earmarked city attractiveness as a key component for maintaining and strengthening city competitiveness.

While emigration represents a key development issue in certain regions, with remittances from abroad accounting for a significant proportion of their GDP, others want to attract talents and connect resident attractiveness to economic attractiveness. While becoming “dormitory cities” does not represent an issue in certain places (Alaux et al., 2015), in others, the population decline raises challenges such as the closure of school classes, the lack of tax revenues, or just the lack of entertainment. Examples of how places are responding to the phenomenon include Japan, which “is paying families 1 million yen to move to the countryside”,⁹ Ireland, which will pay people to move to remote islands,¹⁰ or Swiss Alpine villages that rely on cash incentives to attract families.¹¹ For instance, Albinen (240 inhabitants) offers financial assistance of CHF 25,000 per adult and CHF 10,000 per child, subject to certain conditions, including age (under 45), length of residence (at least 10 years), and a minimum investment of CHF 200,000 in housing. Second homes and property complexes owned by groups of investors are excluded from the offer.

Another example is the French Département of Lozère, which has decided to set up a unit designed to support and attract new residents in response to the falling population. The “Lozère nouvelle vie” scheme encourages new families to settle. The fewer people there are, the more the services on offer, particularly public services, are threatened. Boncourt, a Swiss village with 1200 inhabitants, is also trying to revitalise its population by attracting newcomers, especially families, thanks to low property prices and municipal tax. However, depending on the country and area considered, large cities also sometimes struggle to retain their residents. A common concern among mayors of such cities relates to the decreasing quality of their services, especially schools, which stack up poorly against those of suburbs. Improving public education is therefore often mentioned as the most important factor in attracting suburbanites back to cities.

Quality of life has become a key concept in attracting residents. Subjective in essence, it still implies the fulfilment of numerous conditions, from the comfort a place can offer to economic opportunities and leisure possibilities, but also arts and culture. Depending on the size of the place, it is not easy to offer all the conditions for a high quality of life. Once the material aspects have been satisfied, the atmosphere and the soft aspects still need to be up to the scratch. In this respect, in the Liège area (Belgium), the Liège Together structure not only promotes the city’s image but is also tasked with connecting residents and creating frequent encounters (Box 3.3). The challenge is then to ensure that the place offer follows the promises made in the branding and marketing campaigns.

Box 3.3 The case of Liège Together (Metropolis of Liège, Belgium)

Liège Together belongs to a not-for-profit association (ASBL Liège Métropole) that brings together 24 communes (municipalities) with diverse core characteristics, ranging from very urban to more rural areas. The ASBL Liège Métropole is made up of 26 women and men, local elected representatives who are committed to the development and promotion of the Liège metropolitan area. These representatives are all involved in the implementation and management of supra-municipal action for the Liège Arrondissement (district). The members of Liège Métropole wish to unite their strengths, pool their assets, and carry out projects and actions together with the aim to favour a balanced and sustainable territorial development of the Liège metropolitan area. As mentioned, Liège Métropole also promotes the area through the Liège Together place marketing initiative.

Liège Together defines itself as

a set of actions that all converge towards one objective: to positively change the perception of the Liège area. We want more inhabitants, more students, more investors, more visitors. And for people to look at us differently, as we are. As part of a genuine territorial marketing approach, our approach is twofold: to bring together the players in the Liège metropolis and to promote it in Belgium and abroad by means of a shared identity.

(translation from French to English by the authors)

Liège Together actively participates in marketing efforts deployed in the Liège metropolitan area, which is made up of the 24 communes. As its name suggests, the main goal of the brand name is to promote a sense of shared identity that covers all stakeholders involved in the metropolis: inhabitants, students, companies, investors, and visitors. The team running the brand enjoys the support of the area's other main institutional actors: the city of Liège, the province of Liège, the Walloon Region, and the University of Liège.

Marketing of the metropolis results from collaboration between the ASBL Liège Métropole and the 24 communes, tourist offices at the local level, and "houses of tourism" at the regional level. Liège Together deals with missions that come directly from the 24 communes and the Walloon Region. It supports the development of the Liège area in collaboration with the other institutional actors. For instance, in certain of its activities, it does not focus on the development of tourism *per se*; rather, it collaborates with the tourist offices and pays more attention to developing existing projects and the city's transformation (e.g., ongoing work on the urban transport network). In terms

of marketing, there is now a focus on internal actors, especially at the local level, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent floods that affected several communes of the metropolis.

Liège Together actively promotes actions and plans implemented by political actors in the metropolis. The brand serves an essential communication function, sharing content about itself and about activities that contribute to the area's attractiveness. It plays a role at both the operational level, as we just mentioned, but also at the strategic level, with a power of proposition. However, propositions must receive validation from the ASBL, which also allocates the budget to Liège Together. This structure allows for less politicisation compared to other structures, since the budget relies on contributions paid by the communes themselves. This does not hold, however, for subsidies directly related to specific projects; in this case, the challenge for Liège Together is to ensure funding for the projects.

Involving stakeholders remains a central aspect: as a result, frequent interactions with the communes' mayors and the Liège Province's president and vice-president are essential in the daily operations of Liège Together. Citizens have been involved in collecting data for the communes, especially for raising the area's quality of life (e.g., mobility, sustainable food, etc.). In contrast, private economic actors are not directly involved in projects because they are unelected, and the ASBL, created as a supracommunal mission, has only elected members on its board. Companies may be consulted when their technical knowledge or expertise is required. Nevertheless, their involvement in the attractiveness of the metropolis is vital, and the feeling of belonging to the Liège area ("feeling liégeois") is an important part of the strategy for retaining and attracting target groups (residents, investors, students, and tourists).

The main marketing tools used to achieve this mission range from active communication (social media, radio, newsletter, etc.) to the organisation of events. The aim is to demonstrate the metropolis' capacity to develop a rich cultural scene and to showcase its multiple activities, thereby contributing to the area's attractiveness: a place where all individuals and organisations feel at home, comfortable, and enjoy a good quality of life. While this mission looks attractive on paper, the employees in charge of implementing it acknowledge that after the COVID-19 pandemic, the main challenge is to "reconquer" people and foster a real sense of belonging to the metropolis—not just on social media but in real life, sharing emotions in the public space. This will happen through a constant valorisation of the place.

Box written in collaboration with *Liège Together*.

More information: <https://liegetogether.be/en/>.

In urban contexts, quality of life no longer depends on industrialisation but rather on social and economic services, as well as the quality of the natural ecosystem. As highlighted by Mondal and Das (2018, p. 363),

tree covers, wetlands, and open spaces reduce soil erosion, improve local air quality, reduce the effects of urban heat island, provide natural condition for wildlife, provide shading to buildings, carbon sequestration, and reduce surface runoff erosion. Gardens and parks, green spaces, and trails are highly associated with wellbeing and satisfaction of urban residents.

In this regard, places' ability to influence people's decisions to stay or move relate to the recreational opportunities provided and the preservation of natural spaces. However, it should be noted that while certain places opt for urban revitalisation, through events offerings, for instance, others do not act to reverse the population loss, as they acknowledge that quality of life, in some cases, also depends on ample space for the residents. This points to paradoxes and trade-offs mentioned in the literature: quiet vs. lively environment (people want a vibrant city but also calm neighbourhoods), political willingness to densify space vs. people's desire to have ample space, and so on.

When it comes to arts and culture, it is not just a question of proposing a dynamic offering but also of guaranteeing that it is perceived as authentic by the local population (Ooi and Stöber, 2010). Otherwise, there is a risk of creating a perception gap between what is organised and what is lived and perceived by the locals, which may be counterproductive in terms of attractiveness. Artistic, cultural, and sporting events are important, due to residents' desire for entertainment and leisure opportunities. These events are increasingly perceived as improving places' quality of life. However, the event portfolio strategy—both in terms of scale and quality—should be managed differently, depending on the residents' (positive or negative) approach to variety in life and city size. Dragin-Jensen et al. (2018) showed that in large cities, residents placed more emphasis on quantity-oriented event portfolios.

The academic literature emphasises other factors of residential attractiveness. First, it deals with cohesion in place-development processes. It shows that it may prove difficult to “fit in”, even in rural areas, where integration within a small community is sometimes idealised. For rural communities actively trying to recruit new residents, it is important to remember that recruitment, even when successful, does not solve everything. Moreover, as the authors of a scientific report (EPSON, 2013) explain, different forms of mobility linked to specific groups or mobile populations exist. They are motivated by different place-related assets. This needs to be taken into account when launching an attractiveness strategy. The authors also stress the importance of the composition of the place itself, before launching such a strategy. The cohesion of the place will therefore be essential. Ensuring that cohesion persists will be a success factor for long-term strategies. In the short term, it may be less effective in generating rapid population and economic growth, but it will make places less fragile and development more sustainable.

Second, residents' participation also matters for attractiveness. However, Barreira et al. (2017) explain that in shrinking Portuguese cities, residents are usually not consulted and therefore excluded from the solutions proposed, and decided, by policy-makers in a top-down manner. The authors argue that residents with low levels of civic engagement should be engaged more proactively, since they are mostly found among the most dissatisfied residents. A clear political implication that results from this finding is the necessity of involving all residents in dealing with city shrinkage, because they represent the major part of the places' social capital. Regarding place branding and marketing, Kavaratzis (2017) points out that participatory place-branding processes incorporate a new understanding of how place branding is formed and how it can be influenced by destinations. The interrelated stages of this process are suggested as a valuable tool in destination-branding efforts to develop co-created destination brands. The latter should integrate both the external and internal meanings of locality while responding to market challenges at the same time.

And third, attractiveness is often addressed from the perspective of residents' quality of life and satisfaction. Resident satisfaction has been defined by Barreira et al. (2017) as a multidimensional concept that involves people's assessment of the functional, spatial, and human features of a place and the degree of pleasure/gratification that people get from the place where they live. Predictors of resident satisfaction typically include age, home ownership, income, education level, length of residence, social networking, and so on. Places often send out surveys to gauge people's level of place satisfaction and the main related determinants (the UK does it for social housing, the city of London does it every two years, etc.).

In addition to surveys, which mainly provide information about satisfaction, techniques have been developed to attract specific types of residents. For example, cities can capitalise on their strengths with a methodological approach that categorises groups of people according to their place of residence and the predominant characteristics of neighbourhood residents. These categories allow residents to be targeted on the basis of their socio-economic status, population density, and lifestyle. This technique provides an overview of the potential target groups, enabling the place to put the corresponding marketing actions in place to attract them.

Of course, branding and marketing have also been used to attract residents, even if their primary purpose has been to increase tourism and investment. This is the case of the canton of Neuchâtel in Switzerland, where a visual identity and a promotional campaign were created in 2022 to attract residents. An agency developed the "Neuchâtel, a canton to live in" slogan and a logo with several variations depending on the area targeted within the canton. Several politicians, at both the cantonal and local level, emphasised the place's "excellent quality of life", boasting advantageous tax reforms, excellent pre-school and after-school childcare, and a public transport system that is being improved.

Rurality has been at the core of many branding and marketing campaigns, especially because of the rural-exodus phenomenon mentioned previously, but also in a complementary manner to attract visitors to these areas. However, it often remains

difficult to evaluate the success of branding and marketing efforts, since the decision to migrate is often dictated by many factors. This casts doubt on the efficacy of brochures and television commercials, at least taken as isolated actions. A highly important life decision, migration should be accompanied by concrete measures, especially in the final stages of the decision to move somewhere else, according to Eimermann (2013). He gives a few examples, including Internet communication and migration information meetings, but also assisting migrants when they want to enter into contact with local associations and businesses, language courses, and seminars on entrepreneurship in the country. Branding and marketing campaigns can promote one local area in particular or focus on a wider rural region. Again, their efficacy can be questioned, but Niedomysl (2007, p. 707) argues that “one may view place marketing and promotion campaigns as potential triggers that may provoke decisions which had previously been carefully considered”.

Finally, a recurrent theme that emerges from the place-branding and -marketing literature on residential attractiveness is the targeting of specific groups, as already mentioned. These groups can be highly skilled workers, who can greatly contribute to the economic development of cities. Schade et al. (2018) argue that the cost of living is not a significant city-brand benefit for these workers, who usually receive a high salary. In contrast, city-brand attitudes of these highly skilled workers are significantly affected by social life and self-brand connection, that is, the congruence between the place-brand attributes and their perceptions of such attributes. Other target groups include cultural actors, who may be attracted by a place’s favourable conditions for arts, design, and cultural events in general. In Luxembourg, the new visual identity, based on the *X* symbol, was the subject of a “creathon” workshop that gathered designers, historians, journalists, and others. The slogan of Luxembourg’s signature was “let’s make it happen”. This kind of event can be part of a large event or contribute to the organisation of such an event. Esch, Luxembourg, held the title of European Capital of Culture in 2022.

3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, places interact and evolve in a global context marked by competition. This competition takes various forms, depending on the sector or target group concerned. The challenges of globalisation and megatrends, as well as the impact of the COVID crisis, affect places and their attractiveness asymmetrically (OECD, 2022b). Therefore, the preferred approach differs from one place to another, but the concept of competitiveness highlights the way in which they can be compared and even put under pressure. The characteristics of a place, the way it coordinates its policies, and its governance make up the elements that set the framework within which place-branding and -marketing strategies are implemented. They aim to attract target groups either in a more abstract and symbolic way (place branding) or in a more targeted way, with specific offerings (place marketing). Place branding and marketing, as we will see in the next chapter, can arguably be considered two key processes for increasing place attractiveness.

As emphasised in Chapter 2 and in other parts of this book, the effectiveness of these processes depends on the way they fit into the entire political and institutional context. Existing policies will define the starting point. Among them, regional policies aim at increasing attractiveness, particularly in regions suffering from a lack of economic development. Urban policies support attractiveness in urban areas. International cooperation and development aid policies should also be taken into account. With the mandate to reduce poverty and support development, the question of attractiveness will be raised, at least indirectly. Of course, on the donor side, the narrative of development will not be about improving other countries' attractiveness, since this would be counterproductive for politicians. But still, contributing to the development of a place is in the end, as we have seen in this chapter, a matter of making places more attractive. We can mention here the case of Baidoa, Somalia. With the support of a UN agency, this town has developed a strategy that clearly identifies the main constraints and strengths of Baidoa's context and steers its urban development in a more coordinated way.¹² It could be considered a place audit, which meets the requirements of the first stage in developing a place-marketing strategy aiming at attractiveness, as we discuss in Chapter 13.

Notes

- 1 Gross domestic product. The Beyond GDP initiative is about developing indicators that are as clear and appealing as GDP but more inclusive of environmental and social aspects of progress (https://ec.europa.eu/environment/beyond_gdp/index_en.html#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20'Beyond%20GDP,and%20social%20aspects%20of%20progress).
- 2 See www.s-ge.com/en/article/news/20232-investments-basel-most-attractive-small-city?ct. European Cities and Regions of the Future ranking compares the most promising investment destinations across Europe: www.fdiintelligence.com/special-report/european-cities-and-regions-of-the-future-202223-82082.
- 3 Source: The World Bank. *Tourism and competitiveness*. www.worldbank.org/en/topic/competitiveness/brief/tourism-and-competitiveness.
- 4 Source: Forbes. www.forbes.fr/business/covid-19-les-10-pays-les-plus-dependants-du-tourisme/.
- 5 See, for example, 13 brilliant tourism campaigns reminding us to “dream now, visit later”: www.thenationalnews.com/lifestyle/travel/13-brilliant-tourism-campaigns-reminding-us-to-dream-now-visit-later-1.1000211.
- 6 Allied Market Research: www.alliedmarketresearch.com/MICE-industry-market.
- 7 www.esmadrid.com/mcb/en/news/madrid-worlds-top-mice-destination/.
- 8 www.businessdestinations.com/destinations/place-branding-attracts-tourists-but-leaves-residents-resentful/.
- 9 “Japan is paying families 1 million yen to move to the countryside—but it won't make Tokyo any smaller” (16 Jan 2023) <https://theconversation.com/japan-is-paying-families-1-million-yen-to-move-to-the-countryside-but-it-wont-make-tokyo-any-smaller-197551#:~:text=The%20Japanese%20government%20has%20announced,000%20on%20previous%20such%20payments>.
- 10 See www.businessinsider.com/ireland-will-pay-people-92000-to-move-idyllic-mote-islands-2023-6?r=US&IR=T.
- 11 See www.swisscommunity.org/en/news-media/swiss-review/article/the-alpine-villages-paying-outsiders-to-move-in.

12 UNHABITAT 2022 Baidoa City Strategy: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2023/03/baidoa_urban_plan-3_compressed.pdf.

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4 Place branding and place marketing



4.1 Introduction

This chapter¹ focuses on the emergence of place branding and place marketing as a field of academic interest and scientific inquiry. It first takes stock of the field and the various perspectives adopted by authors from both academia and practice. It then discusses key aspects of the current debates regarding the very definition of place branding and place marketing and acknowledges that much confusion remains around the usage of these two concepts. It therefore presents the main differences and commonalities between place branding and place marketing and suggests a way to accept the inherent confusion between the two concepts while fully grasping their limitations and potential for further research.

4.2 The field of place branding and place marketing

The range of practices and the literature analysing place branding and place marketing has become very broad and includes numerous concepts, even those that initially appear unrelated to marketing, such as land planning, urban planning, and regional development. The total number of scientific papers on topics related to place marketing and place branding has increased exponentially in the last decades, as shown by Vuignier (2017) in a review that included more than a thousand publications between 1976 and 2016. The number of organised conferences and platforms associated with this theme has also increased, and several academic institutions have set up dedicated research centres. As a result, there is an emerging field of research devoted to the scientific analysis of practices related to place promotion. One of the main ideas behind this development is the expectation that branding will help places increase their attractiveness. In this regard, a recent contribution has shown that branding can provide value for boosting regional promotion through the collaboration of stakeholders (Thomas et al., 2021). However, the literature on place branding and marketing is full of idiosyncrasies. As a relatively new multidisciplinary field that is “largely based on anecdotic evidence from single case studies” (Lucarelli and Berg, 2011, p. 14) and influenced by the prescriptive approach of consultants and other practitioners, it is still largely fragmented, lacks empirical data, and requires more academic rigour, as already stated in various contributions.

The literature review from Vuignier (2017) mentioned just previously was conducted to understand this emerging field and assess its current trends. The findings, based on the numbers of items per year obtained via Google Scholar, indicate that 59% of the articles are descriptive, 20% are prescriptive, 12% are critical, and 9% are explanatory. The descriptive papers provide the readers with a presentation of specific phenomena or case studies. Although they can sometimes be sophisticated and analytical, such papers are limited to reporting on a specific reality, which is characteristic of an emerging scientific field. Articles with a prescriptive perspective are characterised by the repeated use of expressions and vocabulary indicating a value judgment. They seek to have a practical effect, to influence and change rather than understand and explain. As a result, they attach little importance to empirical measurements and attribute tremendous importance to prescriptive elements. While almost all of the articles address the managerial implications of their findings, such implications can be found most prominently in articles classified as prescriptive: these articles not only offer recommendations with regard to their specific research findings, but they also advise the reader on elements that at times lack empirical evidence. These documents typically emphasise best practices and rankings.

Articles that adopt a critical perspective highlight the risk of borrowing notions, principles, and tools related to branding and marketing directly from the private sector and of using them for places that are public, political, and endowed with a particular identity. The notion of identity has been addressed numerous times through diverse perspectives and at different levels. At the regional level, Messely et al. (2010) explain that identity building is part of regional institutionalisation, since tangible elements, social constructs, and representations (both internal and external) contribute to the development of the region. In practice, however, it may be complex to grasp the way a place's identity is perceived and used, for instance, in regional branding. Aronczyk (2007, p. 105) argues that, even at the national level, it remains difficult to address the concept of identity:

though the idea of branding is an accepted, or at least tolerated, feature of modern consumer culture, the idea that nations can be produced, branded, and consumed in commodity form is somewhat less palatable. National identity [is] a concept that is notoriously elusive and difficult to define.

This complexity is connected with the diverse approaches to the notion of place itself, as we will discuss in detail in Chapter 5.

Critical articles underscore the complexity and multidimensionality of places, since they question the relevance of applying marketing tools to places: one cannot sell a place with a history, culture, and identity as one would sell an ordinary "product". These contributions usually refer to the power politics associated with place-marketing strategies. They tend to assert that place-marketing activities support a neo-liberal ideology and are part of a symbolic process of domination that can be exploited by the elites. Some authors condemn the fact that spending money on place marketing may be done at the expense of public social policies, which in turn creates social injustice. In addition to attracting external target groups, place

marketing is also a tool for internally legitimising activities that entertain the public to avert protests against local social problems. Making everything polished and simplistic, like the images conveyed in certain places, will inhibit any expression of multiculturalism and render the process selective and discriminating (Holcomb, 1994), and can lead to symbolic poverty (Baur and Thiéry, 2013).

Figure 4.1 illustrates the change between 2005 and 2015 in the proportion of articles using each perspective. The proportions remained more or less constant during this period. However, the percentage of explanatory and critical articles rose very slightly, while the proportion of prescriptive and descriptive articles declined somewhat, although the latter category clearly remains dominant.

The assessment of the literature also reveals that, because of the lack of conceptual clarity and precise definitions, research papers in the field of place marketing and place branding touch on a wide variety of specific topics. Figure 4.2 provides an overview of the diversity of place-branding research in the literature, organising topics along two axes, from a very narrow definition of place branding (on the left) to a very broad definition (on the right) and from strategic notions (at the top) to operational and concrete notions (at the bottom).

Whatever the opinions on the differences and/or similarities between place branding and place marketing, measures to promote places predate this conceptual debate. The way practitioners and researchers talk about these measures can differ significantly, as highlighted in the diversity of concepts presented previously. In addition, promoting places may actually be as old as places themselves. The decision to locate somewhere and become settlers rather than nomads certainly depended on specific criteria (protection, access to water, etc.) that were then communicated, leading to the place's establishment and development. The marketing

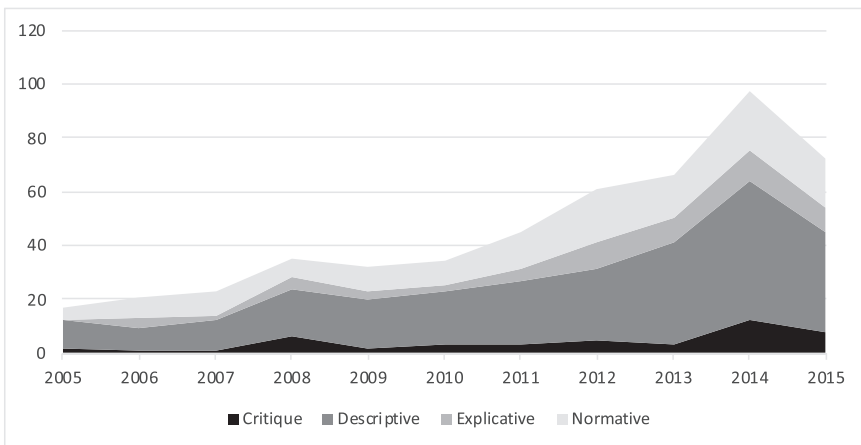


Figure 4.1 Changes of perspective on place branding and marketing between 2005 and 2015

Source: Vuignier (2017)

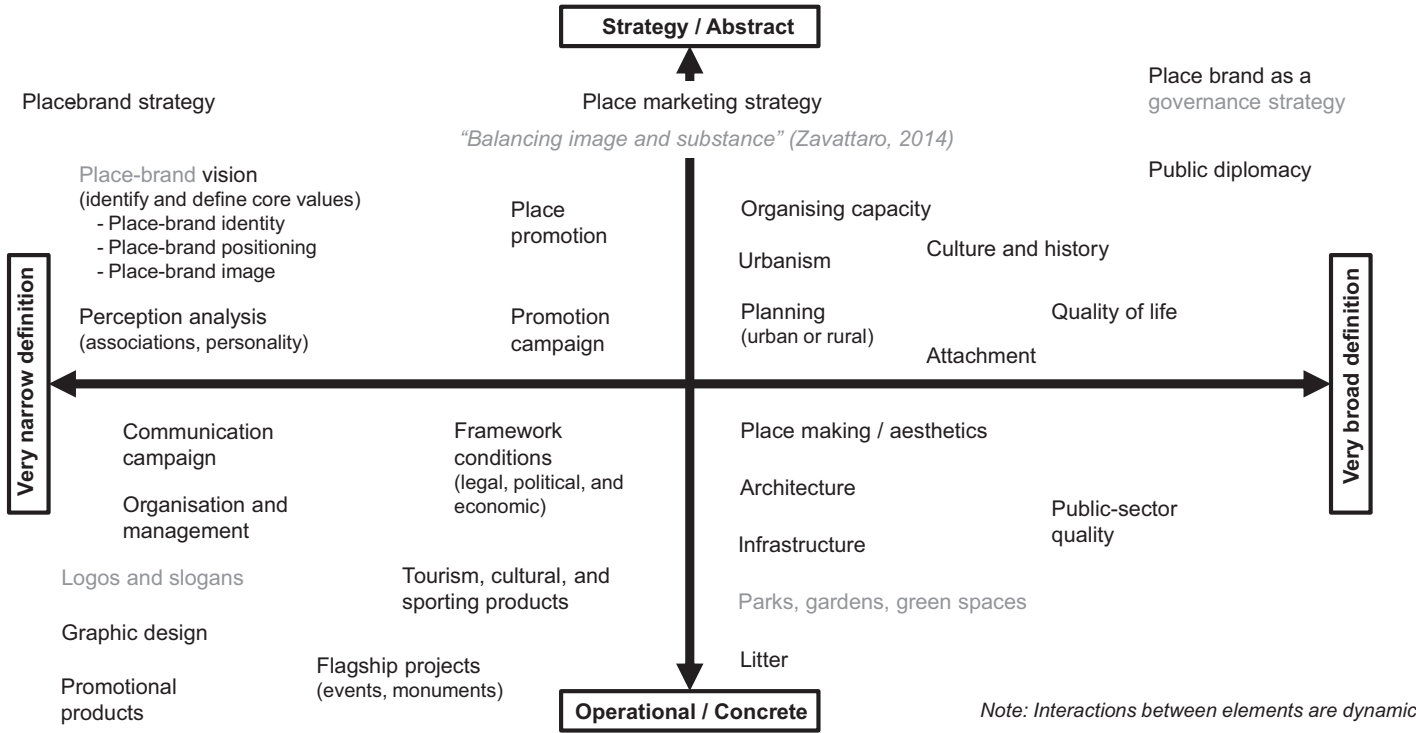


Figure 4.2 The diversity of place-branding and -marketing research

Source: Vignier (2017)

of towns and cities *per se* goes back at least to the 19th century (Ward, 1998), mostly because of the development of transport. Certain railway companies were promoting their services through tourism campaigns, as evidenced by the early 20th-century posters now commonly found in vintage stores. Destinations were already promoted more than 100 years ago (see Figure 4.3).

From the start, we could have asked: was this marketing or branding? It was place marketing, in the sense that there was a clear plan to attract target groups to visit and discover places. It was also branding, because through this promotion, some names gradually became remembered and associated with emotions. But we could also say it was merely a case of practitioners promoting places without overthinking. There was a need to fill trains, to attract tourists and new habitants. Posters provided a convenient way of reaching out to targets.

It was not until the 1970s that marketing and branding practices for places began to become more sophisticated, following the general evolution in the field of marketing. Today, activities related to place marketing, on the one hand, and place branding, on the other hand, encompass interlinked but distinct aspects. Although the literature continues to debate the commonalities and differences between the two concepts (see Skinner, 2008; Boisen et al., 2017), the confusion is not likely to come to an end. But this, we would argue, should not be considered a problem. It is inherent in the very nature of both notions and explained by the simple fact that in practical terms—in the same way as more than 100 years ago—we can only



Figure 4.3 Posters from the early 20th century

Notes: On the left: 1905, Engelberg, Wintersport, Hotels Cattani, by Amrhein, Willy (1873–1926), Poly AG (Laupen, Bern); On the right: 1920, CFF, Ligne pittoresque Yverdon—Sainte-Croix, Sainte-Croix—Les Rasses, Jura, Suisse, by Jaques, François Louis (1877–1937), Klausfelder SA (Vevey), Schweizerische Bundesbahnen.

Source: Swiss National Library, Bibliothèque nationale suisse, Cabinet des estampes: Collection d'affiches

wobble between the two: doing more of one without totally avoiding the other, doing one but realising it contributes to the other, too.

But from a theoretical point of view, it is worth understanding the differences between the two concepts. They can be seen as a spectrum on which cases of pure place branding lie at one end and cases of pure place marketing at the other. The art of practitioners will be to decide on the degree of focus towards one or the other ends. Both refer to marketing measures and efforts to enhance a place, in the broadest sense, which contributes, as an ultimate goal, to the strengthening of the place's image, reputation, and attractiveness for target groups, stakeholders, and the community. Place marketing is concerned with designing a place to meet the needs of its target markets. It is successful when residents and businesses are satisfied with their communities and meet the expectations of visitors and investors (Kotler et al., 1993). Long-term place-branding activities aimed at improving the visibility, image, and reputation of a place are different from place-marketing activities aimed at meeting demand in a short-term horizon.

Govers (2018) considers place branding as starting from the place identity and guided by the offering (what the place is and what it can offer) and place marketing as guided by the demand, by existing markets, and by the target groups and their needs. Place marketing is described by Ashworth and Voogd (1994) as a process by which local activities are linked as closely as possible to the demands of target customers. Since the intention is to maximise the effective social and economic functioning of the area concerned, a place-marketing strategy, unlike some other forms of marketing, must target a variety of audiences. It cannot focus on a single target group, as a certain balance between the groups attracted is vital, whether in terms of tax base or socio-demographic composition. Consequently, places mobilise marketing tools to do market segmentation, targeting, and positioning in a context where public resources are limited (Meyronin, 2015), as will be detailed further in Chapter 8 of this book.

Place marketing focuses on information and data related to target groups: their needs and behaviours, as well as the positioning of the place offering in comparison with offerings proposed by similar types of places. Place branding, on the other hand, will focus on more general trends regarding the place's image and reputation. As Metaxas (2009, p. 1364) underlines, "market research constitutes a very important part of an effective place marketing plan implementation". The marketing and promotion axis includes several measures (networking, advertising, public relations, etc.) that focus on the promotion of places' distinctive characteristics to their potential target markets globally.

Practitioners will have to decide which of the two (place marketing or place branding) to focus on and to prioritise and the extent to which both should be blended. There is a necessary complementarity between branding and marketing in place promotion: a strategic approach must ensure there is a match between symbolic attributes triggered by the place brand and the reality of what the place offers to the target groups. Marketing efforts around place offerings would therefore give substance to the place brand. In the words of Zavattaro (2014), the art of place branding is balancing image and substance.

Another layer of confusion is added by many contributions in the scientific and practice-oriented literature that present the place-branding process as linear. Building a consensual vision, then deciding on a brand strategy, and finally benefiting from the enhanced attractiveness created by the brand points to a much more complex reality.

First, believing that consensus around a common vision for the future of a place is always possible, and that it should be a necessary first step for any strategy, is an illusion. Place branding is also a matter of politics, and interests can be too divergent to build consensus and therefore to develop an integrated place-branding approach. Therefore, the brand is always under construction, although marketing campaigns can be deployed and produce their effects.

Second, the actors deciding on marketing measures do not have the power to create a brand. A notable example materialises when a newspaper headline states that a place is becoming a brand.² Journalists consider the simple act, for example, by a Swiss canton's authorities, of launching a new marketing campaign the creation of a new place brand. But in most cases, such a launch merely consists in the presentation of a new visual identity, with a video highlighting key place attributes and suggesting shared values among the place's inhabitants and leaders. In this sense, this partly fits with the definition of a brand, at least from an operational standpoint. Nonetheless, while a public body has the competence and the ability to launch an appealing marketing campaign, it does not have the power to create a place brand. Only the effect of the brand on people's perceptions and potentially their behaviours will determine the very existence of the brand. In this regard, a government can be successful in implementing a marketing strategy, for example, through various measures such as tax incentives to attract or support the development of specific clusters, but this tells us nothing about the brand's perceptions and potential effects and hence the brand's very existence.

Marketing tools implemented as part of a place-attractiveness strategy can therefore be distinguished from branding efforts as part of a place-branding strategy. While both overlap and, in some ways, complement each other, they refer to different instruments and priorities from a practical public-management perspective. Trying to kill two birds with one stone rarely succeeds in these cases: it is easier to waste time and public money than to achieve results in terms of attractiveness or reputation. The promotion of any place could thus be seen through the lens of the differences and commonalities between branding and marketing, as illustrated in Figure 4.4. This schematisation highlights the fact that efforts to promote a place navigate between place-branding and place-marketing components, the strategic decision being what to focus on (prioritise) and the extent to which aspects from marketing and branding should be blended.

Place-marketing activities may contribute to building a brand in a direct way (via a brand defined as a marketing tool) or an indirect manner (without control and in the long term, via word-of-mouth or by enhancing customers' experience first rather than communicating about the brand). But place-marketing tools encompass the whole range of instruments used to attain and convince target groups. They therefore include various aspects and tools that are not linked with branding but

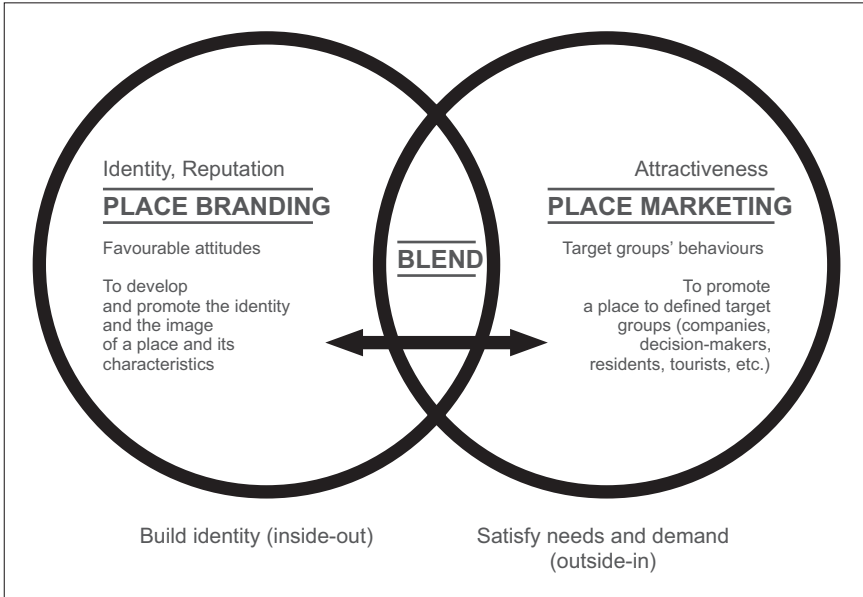


Figure 4.4 Place branding ∞ Place marketing

relate to the place’s development and specific place offerings. At the same time, branding also relates to reputation, identity, and sense of belonging, which is outside the scope of place marketing.

While there is no doubt that branding approaches are part of marketing (as part of promotion activities), the idea that place-brand development is a prerequisite for place marketing is at odds with observed reality. Many weak-branded places develop successful marketing activities, especially in economic development. For example, taken in an international context, the Swiss canton of Fribourg is a weak brand with few differentiation elements in terms of image or reputation. However, due to a fiscal policy adopted in the 1980s (basically a tax exemption for ten years in return for job creation), the canton has managed to attract many companies with high-skilled jobs, such as the financial headquarters and a research-and-development centre of the multinational company Michelin.

When the focus is on the governance and management structure behind place promotion efforts, place marketing and place branding are highly blended. Depending on the strategic mandate given by the place authorities, the focus will be on either marketing or branding. The focus lies primarily on a marketing strategy when the idea is to promote and enhance the place’s value in order to attract and retain various targets. The focus lies on a branding strategy when the development of a place’s distinctive identity is targeted and the management of its image is planned over the medium or long term.

The use of marketing and branding tools is generally accompanied by a narrative that some describe as “magical” (Miles, 2013). This relates to the belief in the power of strategic aims to enhance attractiveness. The brand tool would then act

like a magic wand. We no longer speak of “image” but of “brand image”. The result is a rhetoric of praise for the brand. For example, the creation of logos and slogans is sometimes seen not as the visual part of a sophisticated strategy but as key in itself to generating an attractive identity (Govers, 2013; Hildreth, 2013). Furthermore, the emphasis on emotions and symbols sometimes leads to undervaluing the role of tangible aspects when they are essential, because of a strong focus on the intrinsic value of the brand itself. The example of New York and its place-branding process initiated during the 1970s and 1980s is a well-known illustration of this: the “I love NY” logo/slogan is remembered as a reference and textbook case. However, it is often forgotten that although the process was successful, this was primarily due to the economic-development strategy that underpinned it (Bendel, 2011).

Two elements explain in part the tendency to have exaggerated expectations of the effects of place marketing and place branding despite the paucity of empirical evidence: performative language in place branding and confusion between the branding tool and the overall process. First, performative language corresponds to the idea that the words of place managers or politicians announcing the launch of a place brand contribute to the creation of the brand through the very act of communication. The launch induces other speeches and actions that validate the importance of a branding strategy in terms of attractiveness, a phenomenon that is close to a self-fulfilling prophecy (Staszak, 2000). The contribution of the analyses of performative discourse by political scientists and linguists (e.g., Bourdieu, 1982) makes it possible to identify the underlying stakes in relation to place-branding strategies (Boland, 2013; Houllier-Guibert, 2011): the actors involved in the branding strategy have a vested interest in talking about the brand, and in so doing, they contribute, consciously or not, to its creation. In the literature on branding in general, Manning (2010, p. 34) shows that discourses are rarely devoid of interest and that many authors enjoy promoting this concept. The frequent presence of consultants in the field of place branding and marketing observed by Désilets (2012) undoubtedly explains why the same phenomenon is witnessed concerning places: a large number of analyses on place branding are written by authors who have an interest in the role of place branding being decisive, even overvalued.

Second, the confusion between a place brand tool and the general approach leads to vagueness. While the brand is a specific marketing tool, it is often perceived in the literature and in practice as both a tool and an approach. This vagueness stems from the very definition of place branding: we speak of place branding by referring to a global strategy of attractiveness of which the brand is in fact only one component. This is reinforced by the difficulty of isolating the role of the brand. Indeed, determining the real role played by the brand tool in particular in the attractiveness of a place is complex. Moreover, a place brand considered strong corresponds in principle to an attractive place. However, correlation is not causality. A place brand is strong above all because the place attracts, not the brand. On the other hand, it can be assumed that, by being a strong brand, a place attracts even more.

Both the performative language and the confusion between the tool and the process contribute to the definitional shift observed by several authors who tend to consider that “everything is a brand” (Kotler, 2003, p. 8). Branding has “invaded all aspects of public and private life” (van Ham, 2002, p. 249). The literature is

full of cases of a wide variety of branding objects: famous personalities, such as sports stars (Vincent et al., 2009) or politicians (Goscilo, 2013), can manage their image as brands, as can universities (Bennett and Ali-Choudhury, 2009), hospitals (Sataøen and Wæraas, 2015), political parties and governments (Marsh and Fawcett, 2011), or even public policies and governance reforms (Eshuis and Klijjn, 2011). Any organisation could be interested in adopting branding strategies in all sectors—well beyond producers or distributors of products. With regard to place, a comparable phenomenon tends to conceive each place as a brand. Anholt (2010) believes that cities have always been brands because they produce images in people's heads. For Kotler and Gertner (2002), even a country that does not consider managing its image as a brand does so unconsciously. Maynadier (2009, p. 40) argues that it “seems natural” to manage place brands as market brands insofar as their name carries meaning. Some authors have stated that “every place is a brand” (Boisen, 2015). In fact, we should say that every place *can become* a brand, since it takes more than a name to be a brand.

While it is clear that every place has an image associated with it and that the evocation of a place's name can provoke spontaneous associations in the minds of those who know something about the place or even elicit strong emotions on account of its reputation or a sense of belonging and attachment to the place (Florek, 2011), this is not enough to make every place a brand. Considering any place a potential brand certainly allows us to avoid leaving the monopoly of the use of the place brand tool to certain types of places such as well-known metropolises, but a place is not a brand by nature. It becomes one when a declared strategic-marketing objective is accompanied by a certain brand effect on target audiences, which varies in intensity from a positive or negative perception to an influence on decisions. A review of the literature reveals four main elements that highlight the way in which place branding can be understood from a strategic point of view before focusing on its possible effects. The place that is the object of branding has recognised boundaries (1), specific attributes (2) that are recognised both internally and externally (3), and a structure or organisational setup for managing the place brand within a strategy (4).

Analysing the cases of potential place brands on the basis of these four elements allows us to refute the claim that any place has the status of a *de facto* place brand. Recognised boundaries are meant to clearly differentiate between what is and what is not the brand. The more blurred the boundaries, the greater the risk that the message conveyed will be confused and based on an unshared vision of what specifically is the place to be promoted, which in turn diminishes the effect of the brand. This element is particularly delicate insofar as a place is part of a political-institutional context that exhibits a tangle of perimeters. Multiple contours delimit a place: in particular, there are political, institutional, legal, cultural, and identity-based borders. Moreover, these boundaries are not exclusive, since space is not necessarily divided in a similar way in administrative terms (*territory*) and in terms of a sense of belonging (*place*).

The existence of specific place attributes also appears essential. Without a product having convincing attributes, the brand is nothing. The bitten apple symbol

would mean little if the Apple brand did not offer a range of electronic products, computers, and computer software with distinctive attributes.

Moreover, these attributes must be recognised by the general public, the community, and external target groups. It is widely accepted in the brand literature that having attributes is not enough: they must also be perceived as such (Kapferer, 2013). With regard to places, for many scholars and consultants, the challenge lies not so much in the attributes possessed by the place as in the way these attributes are valued internally and recognised externally. In this respect, place-branding strategies generally adopt two components. An internal component includes a phase that invites the community (the place's stakeholders and the population as a whole) to come together, to list the place's strengths and weaknesses, and especially to become aware of its assets. The phrase "our place deserves to be known" then becomes a recurring refrain in the construction of the place-brand identity by residents (Meyronin, 2015). Another component looks outward, with a focus on knowledge and recognition of the place's attributes. Given these considerations, several authors suggest as a first step in any place-branding strategy the establishment of a diagnosis of the place (place audit), that is, an analysis of its strengths and weaknesses as perceived by various target groups (Chamard et al., 2014).

Finally, the existence and strength of a brand depends on the structure or the organisational setup that manages the brand (Wiedmann, 2014), that is, on the implementation of the branding strategy. With regard to places, various authors interested in place-brand management stress the importance of the structure put in place to implement place-marketing and -branding activities (Ashworth and Kavaratzis, 2009). Whereas for classic brands, the organisation is both the company and the brand, a place brand generally requires the setting up of an *ad hoc* structure for its management. This structure aims mostly at gathering stakeholders. The organisation modes resulting from political-institutional arrangements are varied. A steering committee may oversee the process, with the risk of being overly influenced by a particular political institution. The creation of an independent association is another option, the autonomy of which depends very much on the details of its organisation and the financial and human resources allocated. The most integrated form involves partnerships between public, semi-public, and private actors resulting in an autonomous agency, sometimes resulting from the merger of existing agencies focusing on a specific aspect, such as a business or tourism location. In fact, many places do not have a centralised structure for the management of marketing and branding activities. Several different entities are thus active in a fragmented manner, implementing measures related to branding and marketing, lacking an integrated, coordinated approach. Among existing structures, the case of Liège Together (see Box 3.3) relies on existing political institutions for coordinated marketing activities. While the question of whether less management room for manoeuvre may be detrimental to efficient marketing and branding measures remains open, a structure such as that used in Liège highlights the benefits in terms of legitimacy (since elected officials are involved) and proximity with local stakeholders, in comparison with an *ad hoc* structure such as an autonomous agency. Whatever the form chosen, the establishment of a structure appears to be a necessary condition for developing a place brand.

4.3 Branding for places

Like marketing, branding has evolved and is now applied to basically everything. Branding has become “so strong that today hardly anything goes unbranded” (Kotler and Armstrong, 2013, p. 255). From a marketing tool focusing foremost on visual identity and symbols that could distinguish, differentiate, and make a product recognisable in the minds of target groups and in relation with competitors, it has become a broad strategic concept concerned not only with perception, image, and mental associations but also with general awareness, identity, and reputation. This broad approach may also apply to territorial entities, at different levels (city, region, or country). At the country level, the case of nation branding in Kazakhstan is presented in Box. 4.1.

Box 4.1 Nation branding in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan, the world’s ninth-largest country and the biggest of the five Central Asian Republics, has pursued an ambitious nation-branding strategy over the last three decades. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan became independent in 1991 “almost by accident” (Schatz, 2006). Facing internal divisions and a weak basis for political legitimacy, building up a narrative around the state’s role and place in the international system became a policy priority for the governments led by its first and until 2019 only president, Nursultan Abishuly Nazarbayev. Under Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan was generally described as a “soft-authoritarian” regime by academic observers. In the years post-independence, Nazarbayev worked to portray “an image of a state elite that was engaged internationally and therefore deserving of support domestically” (Schatz, 2006, p. 270). To give form to this vision, Nazarbayev launched the Kazakhstan 2030 Strategy during his annual presidential address in 1997 and the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy in 2012. In addition to publishing glossy national vision documents to be displayed and distributed online as well as at official events, state institutions, and political and diplomatic representations abroad (Alderman and Eggeling, 2023, pp. 11–15), the Kazakhstani government has also invested considerable resources into more targeted nation-branding projects, particularly in the education, sports, cultural, and urban development sectors.

The main ambition driving the Kazakhstani brand has been the building of an attractive, holistic image of a state that is claiming its rightful place in the international community. Beyond the attraction of foreign investment or the hosting of events, Kazakhstan’s branding strategy has been a multifaceted and multi-layered attempt at (re)writing the state’s identity along political, geographic, historical, and ethical lines. What projects such as the urban re-vamping of the capital city centre in Astana, bidding for and hosting the International Specialized Exhibition (Expo 2017), the affiliation with or building of international elite universities, and the nurturing of elite sports

clubs and teams like the Astana Cycling Team all have in common is that they present and repeat the same narratives about Kazakhstan's past, present, and future. Spread across all these projects is an understanding of Kazakhstan as an independent, stable, professionally run state that sits at the crossroads of Western and Eastern civilisations, has ancient roots but is quickly developing, and has generally been thriving under the leadership and guiding vision of former President Nazarbayev.

Kazakhstan's nation branding has mainly been institutionalised in the Office of the President, the local and regional Akimats, the Department of International Information under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the state-sanctioned clubs and institutions (such as Nazarbayev University, Air Astana and the Astana Presidential Sports Club) founded to support the branding of Kazakhstan via high-profile prestige projects in a particular sector. It is hard, if not impossible, to guess the overall budget Kazakhstan—a modern rentier state whose primary source of income rests on the sale of natural resources (mainly natural gas)—has invested in building up its international image since independence. The financing of nation-branding projects is tied to Samruk Kazyna, the country's national wealth fund. Yet, given the political priority, the investments in the state's international image are substantial. The Astana Presidential Sports Club alone, for example, was in 2010 assumed to consume an annual budget of US\$ 100 million (Eggeling, 2020).

A simultaneous key challenge and opportunity for the Kazakhstani nation-branding exercise has been the almost complete global ignorance of Kazakhstan until the mid-2000s. At this time, the knowledge vacuum was filled by a British comedian and his alter ego Borat Sagdiyev. Created by Sacha Baron Cohen, Borat, a mocking representation of a Kazakhstani reporter, presented a real problem for Nazarbayev's image-conscious government. Given Borat's grotesque rendering of Kazakhstani national identity, the government initially threatened Baron Cohen with a lawsuit, as the image that Kazakhstan had "poured millions into to convince the West that is pluralistic, stable, prosperous, and open to investments" was being mocked (Saunders, 2007). Eventually, this situation dissolved and Nazarbayev managed to see the funny side of it. On a state visit to the UK in November 2006, he said that "this film was created by a comedian, so let's laugh at it . . . any publicity is good publicity" (Aitken, 2009).

Kazakhstan's nation-branding project, especially during the Nazarbayev years (1991–2019) provides a fascinating case study in how stories of statehood, place, identity, and political and economic ambition mix and congeal in sites and practices of everyday life. For a while, the Kazakhstani brand was everywhere—on cycling jerseys, in the headlines surrounding global events like the Expo 2017 and the 2024 Winter Olympics, or in Western newspapers as photo spreads of its capital's unlikely futuristic skyline (Moore, 2010). On the one hand, it will be interesting to follow where the Kazakhstani nation brand will go beyond Nazarbayev (who is 82 now

but still serves as the ceremonial “Leader of the Nation”), as well as how Kazakhstan will claim its place in a shifting world order of more fierce geopolitical competition between Russia, China, and the US and Europe. On the other hand, the example of Kazakhstan should be a textbook case allowing scholars and practitioners interested in nation and place branding to adopt a holistic understanding of the practice. Nation branding, as the Kazakhstani case shows, is not a superficial marketing technique but a deeply political practice that not only represents and sells but first makes and solidifies ideas and claims about national identity.

Box written by Kristin A. Eggeling.

Place branding is usually defined as “the application of branding to places such as cities, regions and countries” (Kavaratzis and Florek, 2022, p. 507). It involves a series of steps, based on research and data analysis, the development of a strategy, stakeholder involvement, communications, and an evaluation exercise that should lead to the improvement of the whole process. These steps are expected to establish good relationships and trust between the place’s stakeholders, increase confidence in the place brand, guarantee the locals’ satisfaction with place-making, and improve the place’s reputation.

From a managerial point of view, there is a distinction between branding activity at the operational level and a brand strategy. The first exists via a visual identity (often a logo and a slogan) and is regulated by a brand policy that sets out the rules for its practical use (including trademark issues). The second defines the identity of the brand (current identity) as well as a strategic vision, including values shared (desired image and ambitions). A brand has also become a vast notion to the extent that it can arguably be considered a concept of its own, independent from marketing. Kapferer (2012, p. 2) suggests an interesting distinction in this regard: “paradoxically, it takes more than branding to build a brand”. This means it is not enough to launch a brand as a marketing tool including a visual identity, to create a proper brand, in the sense of a symbolic construct that evokes mental associations, imbues meaning, communicates an identity, contributes to a reputation, and (potentially) influences judgments and behaviours. In other words, the intended effect (building a strong brand) goes well beyond marketing activities such as branding.

Initially considered a marketing tool among others (focusing on visual identity and symbols), the brand has become a vast notion (focusing on values, image, and reputation), to the point where branding can arguably be considered a concept of its own, independent from marketing. Place branding therefore no longer refers only to the place brand as a marketing tool but tends to be defined in the literature (Vuignier, 2018) as a concept encompassing all marketing measures and efforts deployed to develop and enhance the place, with the ultimate goal of reinforcing the place’s image and reputation in the minds (and hearts) of various target groups (current and potential residents, students, visitors, talents, entrepreneurs, investors, etc.). In fact, place brands can be considered from various perspectives. The following paragraphs take the reader on a journey presenting what a place brand is

and what it is not: (1) through a legal lens, (2) through a communication lens, (3) from the angle of its architecture, and (4) through a marketing lens, through which the place brand becomes a holistic strategic concept.

Place branding through a legal lens

The differentiation of the terms trademark and brand has the advantage of clarifying matters, as opposed to other languages, including French and Spanish, which use the same word for both notions (*marque, marca*). Trademark refers to the brand from a legal point of view and has clear legal definitions in specific legal regimes that give exclusive exploitation rights on, for example, a name, a slogan, and a logo. As such, “a trademark is a sign which distinguishes the goods or services of one undertaking from those of other undertakings. Trademarks are protected intellectual property rights”.³ Place trademarks are not subject to a specific legal regime within trademark law and the Industrial Property Code. They are registered by local authorities themselves or by dedicated promotional associations as individual or collective trademarks. Several types of brands can be envisaged for places: trademarks, copyrights, industrial design rights, certificate marks, collective brands, or specific brands (of their own kind: *sui generis*) such as geographical indications (GI), including appellations of origin (AO).

One of the first tourist locations in the world to protect its name was the Swiss Alpine resort of St. Moritz in 1987, which registered “St. Moritz”, with its slogan “Top of the World”, in Switzerland and the European Union. In France, the pioneering place brand in terms of legal protection is likely to have been the commune of Saint-Tropez, a legal entity under public law, which in 1992 registered the name “Saint-Tropez” as a trademark with the National Institute of Industrial Property. Currently, it is common to see collective trademarks, such as Jeruzalem Slovenija,⁴ featuring local high-quality products with a certain legal protection while conveying messages and stories about the place and how local residents experience and live to emphasise sustainability and proximity, or localness.

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), place trademarks can contribute to reinforcing the competitiveness of a place. From a marketing point of view, it remains difficult to determine with empirical evidence to what extent registering a place brand as a trademark contributes to strengthening the place brand (in terms of image or attractiveness). Nevertheless, doing so can undoubtedly bring useful legal protection for a place if the competitive context justifies the fear of being copied or contains the risk of nonconforming use of the place name. It also formalises the place brand and clarifies the modes of use of the terms and signs.

Legal protection for brands corresponds to what Kapferer (2011) calls a defensive function. For place brands, the ownership of the brand being by nature collective, and names of places being excluded from exclusive use by economic actors (Vuignier, 2018), the importance of legal protection for a specific place brand is diminished. On the contrary, practical cases show a trend towards unrestricted use of place brands subject to the condition of respecting general principles and sharing values pinpointing the brand. For example, a place-brand code and graphic outputs have been developed and made publicly available by the French region Brittany

for the brand BRETAGNE.⁵ A place-brand box containing communication content (pictures, films, factsheets), as well as practical advice on how to use this content, is provided freely by Oslo.⁶ The rationale behind making place-brand outputs freely accessible is twofold. First, this underlines the inclusiveness of the place-brand process: everybody who wishes to contribute to the promotion efforts should be welcome to do so, provided that they follow general terms. Second, the easier it is to access place-brand visual contents, the more likely they are to be spread and generate awareness. The fact is, for many (if not most) places, the basic challenge is to become known by the public, even their own inhabitants.

The legal protection of GI, including AO, is an issue in itself that falls far beyond the scope of this book and has been addressed by other scholars. GI and AO contribute to the construction of a place's reputation and act as a tool for the legitimate location of economic activity or as an intellectual property right, an economic instrument, a tool for rural development, or even a policy for the defence of cultural heritage.

Place branding through the communication lens

Launching a place-branding initiative often starts with the idea of communicating about the place because of a lack of awareness and knowledge about the opportunities it offers. As already mentioned, it is common to hear from place authorities that their place deserves to be better known. In their words, the place is generally already communicating, but in a fragmented way and without enough outreach. And the simplest way to communicate about a place brand is to create a visual means: a logo. By definition, a logo is a symbol constituting a brand, or more specifically a graphic element that symbolises a name, a brand, a company, or an organisation. However, a logo is not the brand itself. It can convey a message and play the role of a sign for a strategic initiative, but it represents only the tip of the iceberg, the visible and concrete part that is not crucial from a strategic point of view compared to the content of the initiative.

In the literature on place branding, the difference between place image and place brand remains blurry (Florek and Kavartzis, 2014). The place's image is the main component of the brand, which is consistent with the literature on the classical brand. According to certain authors (e.g., Arvidsson, 2006), branding adds psychological and social value through symbolic meaning. For others (e.g., Hosany et al., 2006), the opposite is true: the brand is a component of the image, the latter being approached as a broader and more abstract notion. As a result, many consultants and practitioners tend to consider any place a potential brand. From this perspective, any place could communicate about its brand at any time, and any communication activity could be considered a place-branding activity.

While this book attempts to make readers aware that communication and place branding are not the same thing and to provide clarifications about related concepts, place-branding efforts are intertwined with communication efforts. A place brand is aimed at harmonising the way place authorities and place stakeholders communicate, with a shared vision, to achieve commonly agreed goals, such as

improving the place's quality of life or developing its attractiveness (with or without quantified targets). The case of Ghent (see Box 4.2) provides an interesting example of how place branding can be employed as a communication tool by using the perception of values shared by inhabitants and other place stakeholders to support the place brand, placing them at the core of the content of the city's communication, resulting in authentic stories that build a dynamic and "lived" identity.

Box 4.2 The case of Ghent, Belgium

Ghent is a Belgian city with a rich past. In medieval times, it was among the largest and wealthiest cities in Europe, and its old town is still dominated by the architectural wonders of that time. As the capital and the largest commune (with around 265,000 inhabitants) of the East Flanders province, it has developed as a port and as a university, attracting approximately 80,000 students. Ghent is known for its cultural past and present; modern architecture; a lighting plan; an inspiring food scene; green mobility; and, more generally, the fine quality of life that characterises the city. However, these are aspects that are applicable to many cities across the world.

In terms of branding, the promotion of all these aspects points to one big question: what makes Ghent "Ghent"? What are the "Ghentian" values? To answer these questions, Ghent launched a process of reflection in 2019–2020. The city hired consultants and considered stakeholder involvement essential to build up the Ghentian brand.

This brand focuses on the way Ghent "handles things". Ghent handles things differently and provides a *free city* to those who want to express themselves. The brand values focus on openness, care for each other (*united*), creativity (*offbeat*), and exploration (*ground-breaking*). This conceptualisation results from two phases: (1) the engagement of stakeholders—public, private and political—in determining the brand values and (2) the distribution of surveys and the organisation of focus groups to validate these values. As a result, the definition of the shared Ghentian values originated from the stakeholders involved in the process, making sure that they can embrace the brand more easily in their activities. Moreover, the Ghentian brand is in fact a distillation of what Ghent has been doing for many years, now merely spotlighted and defined. The brand values have been given political approval by the mayor and aldermen with the signing of an executive board decision.

The brand management team (two employees since January 2021) belongs to the communication team within the city's "Business Operations" department. Their operational strategy and priorities are aligned with the city administration's ambitions, as set out in the different sectoral policy reports. The team has six strategies for implementing the brand in Ghent: (1) activation of the brand internally, (2) activation externally, (3) monitoring of the brand, (4) applying the brand in sectoral marketing, (5) focusing on main

events and theme years, and (6) implementation of the brand in the city marketing fund.

Brand management in Ghent focuses on place-making rather than city marketing. By constantly challenging stakeholders in the city to make their project and activities *on brand*, actors tell the same story about the city, breathing the Ghentian values. Accordingly, sectoral departments (e.g., tourism, economic actors, urban development) are responsible for their own sectoral marketing strategy (deciding their main focus, priorities, and target groups), while the brand management team helps with the *on brand* development of these strategies. The process is like riding a bicycle with two seats, where the brand manager is on the back seat reminding the rider in front not to forget the Ghentian brand by asking: how does this reflect the Ghentian brand? What are the values that cannot be “copied and pasted” to another city? For example, while the economic department set its own priorities (e.g., a focus on high-tech), the brand manager challenges them on how to make these priorities appear “Ghentian” to both internal and external actors. Also, the tourist office works closely with the brand management team to develop an *on brand* destination development strategy.

Even in urban development, the Ghentian brand is showcased. The team of the city architect of the city of Ghent, whose role is to ensure the quality of building projects in terms of architecture, urban planning, and public space in Ghent, made the Ghentian brand one of the eight principles for urban-development assignments and projects in Ghent.

In addition, the city marketing fund (€ 250,000 per year), managed by the brand management team, supports projects of external stakeholders to promote Ghent. The fund has existed for over 20 years, but since brand management has been in place, the Ghentian brand is the first criterion for acceptance. Only when a project application passes the *on brand* check (made by the brand management team) does it proceed to a second assessment by the city marketing fund jury (made up of the managing director and several city-administration department heads) to check other criteria such as impact, marketing value, and contribution to the city’s policy. In this way, all events and projects funded showcase the Ghentian brand.

The brand management team has an operational budget that allows for regular interactions with the city’s stakeholders (including citizens) through, for example, brand filter workshops, brainstorming sessions, information sessions, and communications sent to all actors on a regular basis. These are the main tools that the team uses to implement the brand. Stakeholder participation is the key ingredient in anything that happens in Ghent. For example, conferences have been organised with residents on the future of tourism in the city, and channels have been kept open to ensure lasting discussions and feedback.

The biggest challenge for the team is to have a seat at the table, at the right time, especially with iconic events or theme years such as the 2030 European

Capital of Culture bid. At the right time means at the beginning of the process, and not at the end when substantive changes can no longer be made. It is all about keeping up the work and awareness of the Ghentian brand.

Box written in collaboration with Melanie De Vocht and Eveline Vincke, brand managers of the city of Ghent.
More information: www.stad.gent/placebranding.

As a place is by nature composed of various institutions, development of the field of place branding has been inspired by institutional (also called corporate or organisational) branding (as opposed to product or service branding). Developing an institutional branding strategy is a sign of an entity's desire to manage its reputation at an organisational level. The corporate brand is the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of an organisation, whether it is a private company, a public entity, or any other organisation or group of people. It is supposed to summarise in its name and visual symbol all the added value created by the experiences of customers (more generally of all the people with whom the organisation is in contact), its products, its channels, its stores, its communication, and its employees. Managing this brand therefore translates externally into strategic and coordinated management of touch points: from product or service to channel management, advertising, website, word-of-mouth, organisational ethos, and so on and internally into management of the organisational culture guided by the brand's values and missions (Kapferer, 2012). Institutional branding encompasses part of product branding in that it creates synergies between product brands. Place branding and organisational branding go beyond branding a single type of tangible object to brand multiple tangible objects (concrete features, products, and services) and intangible elements (symbols, values, attitudes, visions). Both forms of branding seek to bring together diverse stakeholders and identities (which requires intra- and inter-organisational cooperation) and include collective and social aspects (Kavaratzis, 2009). Place branding can in this regard be understood as the place's institutions' joint branding.

However, place branding and institutional branding are distinct types of branding, even though certain similarities can lead to confusion. First, the institutional brand valorises the actions and services of the authorities, whereas the place brand highlights the whole place, its products, and its services, together with its public, private, and associative actors. Second, institutional branding is led by elected officials with a focus on the institutions with internal target audiences, whereas place branding is generally driven by a multi-stakeholder governance with a focus on a collective co-construction process aimed at both internal and external audiences. Finally, the perimeter of what falls under place branding is broader and fuzzier than the corresponding perimeter of institutional branding (see Table 4.1).

While this distinction makes it possible to avoid confusing an approach that emanates exclusively from institutions with a place-branding strategy that is supposed to be the result of a broader consultation process, the differences can be very

Table 4.1 Differences between institutional branding and place branding

<i>Institutional branding</i>	<i>Place branding</i>
Promotion of actions and services delivered by institutions (i.e., the authorities)	Promotion of all products, services, and public and private actors of the place or linked with the place
Institutions at the centre	Collective initiative (co-construction)
Communication and strategy steered by elected officials	Communication and strategy steered via a multi-stakeholder governance
Branding of the “institutional territory” (name of the institution, clear perimeter, official logo)	Branding of the place as a whole (name of the place, of the destination, perimeter with variable geometry, shared logo)
Main target groups: internal (residents, taxpayers and citizens)	Target groups: internal and external
Examples of logo:	Examples of logo:
	

Source: Adapted from Gollain (2012)

thin, and the evolution of practices tends to reduce them. On the one hand, the branding process is often initiated, guided, and supported by institutional authorities. On the other hand, institutional branding increasingly valorises the entire place. The difference that seems to persist lies more in the targets: institutional branding is mainly aimed at residents, taxpayers, and citizens, while place branding seeks to attract and retain not only internal but also external targets.

Place branding from the angle of brand architecture

In the case of place-brand management, the specificities of the place as a branding object imply a particular “brand architecture”. The concept of brand architecture expresses the way in which a portfolio of brands is structured (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). It analyses the spectrum of relationships between brands, from the case of an organisation that manages different brands (house of brands) to an organisation that is itself the brand and manages different sub-brands (branded house), and leads to thinking about the way in which product brands, the corporate brand, and sub-brands are linked and managed. The architecture of the place brand is particular in that it corresponds simultaneously to several models. It is by nature an umbrella brand because, in seeking to brand the whole place, it can bring together under one roof a whole range of heterogeneous products,

services, and organisations that are associated with different promises: a product brand for the particular potential products that it signs with a regional label, a range brand if a set of these products represents a coherent whole summarised in a promise, or a guarantor brand if the brand that is affixed acts as a guarantee for a set of products and services that are interconnected (Michel, 2010, p. 11). The place brand is an umbrella brand like no other, because it not only brands a set of products and services but also a set of organisations and institutions. This particularity is further reinforced: a place brand is the sub-brand of a place brand of another place encompassing it. If, in a given country, the local, regional, and national levels develop their respective place brands, whether coordinated or not, they are *de facto* all linked to each other. In this respect, it can be observed that sub-national approaches sometimes refer to the national level. For example, many of the visual identities of cantonal tourism offices and economic-development agencies refer to Switzerland. The city of Brisbane promotes itself using the slogan “Brisbane, Australia’s new world city”. Glasgow has adopted the following slogan: “Glasgow—Scotland with Style”.

Thus, a comprehensive place-brand architecture can, under the same banner, bring together and promote local products, services from companies located in the territory, official communication, goods produced in the territory (made in, designed in), the destination (tourism), the place as a location for life (live in), and the place as a location for establishment (invest in). The place brand is therefore linked to:

- regional labels;
- the effect of the place of origin of products, services, and organisations;
- the institutional brands of authorities, companies, or other organisations of the place.

First, the place brand can be linked to regional labels, either independent or emanating from the same organisation. For example, the AO and GI systems mentioned previously contribute to the construction of a place’s reputation and act as “a device allowing the legitimate localisation of economic activity . . . or as an intellectual property right, an economic instrument or a tool for rural development, or even a policy for the defence of cultural heritage” (Boisseaux and Leresche, 2002, p. 38; our translation). The place brand can be linked to certifications, such as “certificates of excellence” (e.g., “Valais excellence” for the brand initiated by the Canton of Valais, Switzerland). Local product labels are also often integrated into place-branding approaches.

Second, place branding is also related to the place of origin of a product, service, or company. An extensive literature has studied the country-of-origin (COO) effect, also called the made-in effect (Usunier, 2011). To the best of our knowledge, it does not focus on place branding as an object of study but only on the effect of the place of origin, essentially of countries, in relation to the marketing of a product, service, or organisation. It analyses the effect of the place of production or design (designed in) on consumer perception in terms of reputation and purchasing behaviour. The

American Marketing Association (2015) defines the country-of-origin effect, which we extend to places, as follows: “the effect that the country [place] of origin of the product has on the buyer’s quality perceptions of the product”.

A few authors have brought together the literature on place marketing and the literature on the place-of-origin effect, such as Kotler and Gertner (2002). An interesting observation is the possibility of an inverse place-of-origin effect, whereby the reputation of a place’s products, services, and organisations can influence the reputation of the place as a whole and thus the place brand. Gentric et al. (2014) noted that certain place-branding approaches allow companies to highlight not only the origin of their products but also their attachment to a place, their anchoring to a region. Observing a participation of a company in the place-branding process in interaction with the stakeholders of a place, including the inhabitants, the authors evoke a shift from a *made-in* effect to a *made-with* effect.

Moreover, the image of a place can, in some cases, be strongly influenced by the image of a company headquartered there or by that of some of its brands. We can mention the strong association between the IKEA brand and Sweden, the French town of Camembert, home of the eponymous cheese, or the American city of Austin, Minnesota. The latter is nicknamed “SPAM Town USA” in the United States, in reference to the SPAM brand of pre-cooked canned meat of the Hormel Foods Corporation, which is headquartered there and is the city’s largest employer. These aspects of place-branding strategy and management are rooted in the expectations placed on the mobilisation of this marketing concept.

Place branding through the marketing lens: a holistic strategic concept

When place brand is mobilised as a marketing concept, it becomes more than a name and a tool for communication. This implies a positioning among other places (the place develops a brand to differentiate itself vis-à-vis others) and assumes the place brand has, like commercial brands, various functions. Based on the literature review by Vuignier (2017), the expected functions and potential effects of place brands are the following:

- Identity-based and symbolic: the identity function can be translated by a feeling of belonging (place attachment) and a common understanding, among stakeholders, of what the place is, and what it will be, or how it should evolve (rallying effect of the brand internally);
- Unifying and guiding: the place-branding approach brings people together if it is based on a consensus around a vision or projects for the place. In principle, it is materialised by an open networking of actors encouraged to interact and collaborate and the implementation of deliberative processes open to multiple stakeholders. It potentially brings cohesion between the place stakeholders;
- Harmonising: the place brand can give coherence to the place offering through harmonised communication, where various initiatives in different sectors (services to residents, tourism, economic development, and promotion) all refer to the same brand and a shared vision;

- Distinctive and informative (differentiation): the perception of the place brand by the target groups allows them a cognitive shortcut that distinguishes the place from other places and has the potential to provide information on the expected attributes. This function can operate through two different types of brand effects (Vuignier, 2018):
 - The “halo effect” (or contamination effect) refers to a bias that affects perception. Vague memories of past experiences, presuppositions, or prejudices tend, consciously or unconsciously, to accentuate people’s judgment in a positive or negative direction, through a selective perception of information based on first impressions. In this regard, the place brand is seen as a signal that allows target groups to make inferences about what the place offers.
 - The “summary effect” (or summary construct) differs from the halo effect in that it corresponds to the brand’s ability to refer to information known and already memorised by target groups. In this regard, the place brand synthesises information about what the place offers.

Styvén et al. (2020) underline the importance of place attachment in place-branding processes. Place identity is defined by place stakeholders, who feel varying degrees of attachment to the place. The authors show that this sense of belonging is of high importance and argue therefore that stakeholder involvement in place branding is a key factor of success. In their analysis, residents should be incentivised to participate in an increasing number of communication activities, including advertising. For example, the destination-management offices (DMOs) of the Swedish city of Gothenburg and the Spanish city of Barcelona have both prioritised the quality of life of residents, which has translated into high levels of place attachment and the involvement of the residents and the local community in communicating about the place brand.

Eshuis and Edelenbos (2009) show that place branding can be considered a planning instrument that brings stakeholders together, building, from the start, a consensus on the strategic vision for the place, for example, for urban-regeneration projects, which is aimed at improving place development. If the reality of the place, its strengths and weaknesses, are taken into account and the identity of the place is discussed and defined by stakeholders as preliminary steps, the place-branding process can then create positive perceptions (for example, of regenerated areas), and the place brand functions as a compass, presenting clear directions and guiding the place development (how the place wants to evolve, what the place wants to become in the long run).

In the same vein, but from a critical perspective, Warnaby and Medway (2013) highlight a danger for place branders. Defining a place too unanimously and narrowly in conceptualising it as a marketing tool is problematic. In commodifying a place as a product or a brand, the essence can get lost. Consequently, those who feel a strong attachment to the place, which differs from the one consensually elaborated by the main stakeholders as part of a place-branding initiative, can feel marginalised and placeless. The authors point out that the marketing perspective, which tends to focus on value propositions that places can offer to their

target groups, remains reductive. Any place is, by definition, a collective construct bringing together diverse actors and encompassing a multitude of attributes.

The case of Oslo, briefly mentioned previously, highlights the relevance of focusing first on the development of a common strategy, which will bring cohesion between place stakeholders, and naturally lead to more harmonised communication. Suffering from a lack of international awareness and a lack of coordination between the actors in charge of promotion, global strategy work for a place brand for Oslo was carried out in 2014 and 2015. This led to the formation of a Brand Alliance to improve synergies. This alliance, consisting of Visit Oslo, Oslo Business Region, and Oslo Region Alliance, gave rise to Oslo Brand Partners, which works on the region's international positioning, based on the idea that a clear and attractive image of Oslo and Norway is a prerequisite to retain and attract expertise, investment, and visitors. The activities of Oslo Brand Partners are financed by, among other things, a voluntary contribution from the member municipalities (who number about 30).

An empirical study conducted by Vuignier (2018) in the Canton of Vaud, Switzerland, sheds light on the place-brand effect, suggesting that a place-brand summary effect occurs during companies' location decision process. The study highlights a certain disconnect between a place-branding initiative launched at the cantonal level, which finances most of the economic-promotion efforts, and the effect on companies, which are more sensitive to the national brand (Switzerland) and to place offerings crossing cantonal borders (cross-border economic clusters that offer competitive attributes). This underlines the fact that every place brand is, by virtue of geography, encompassed in multiple layers of place brands. Place branding at different levels can therefore co-exist, and some degree of contradiction between place-brand messages cannot be ruled out. For the canton of Vaud, the cantonal level clearly refers, through the Swiss flag, to Switzerland. This is a trend that can be observed in plenty of place-branding initiatives for economic promotion and tourism at the subnational level in Switzerland (see Figure 4.5).



Figure 4.5 Place brands in Switzerland, with subnational initiatives often referring to Switzerland in their logos

Source: Own elaboration based on existing logos

Understanding the place-brand summary effect can help promoters to prioritise the determining factors of attractiveness to be communicated. This could provide useful arguments for place-branding campaigns and break away from the tendency to emphasise general messages (often conveyed via superficial slogans) and instead focus on factors of differentiation (of relevance for target groups). Moreover, if some determining factors were already strongly linked to the place brand in the minds of target groups, place promoters would be well advised—resources being limited—to prioritise their communication efforts by focusing on other factors that are insufficiently known by the targets they seek to attract (Vuignier, 2018). This brings us to the importance of linking place-branding initiatives, which seek to create a place that is *attractive* (with a focus on image and reputation), and place marketing, which aims to develop an *attracting* place (with a focus on target groups' perceptions and behaviours).

Given the blurry frontiers between place branding and place marketing on the one hand and the multiple functions of a place brand (as presented previously) on the other, several initiatives have endeavoured to adopt a holistic approach, launching projects composed of various branding and marketing dimensions. A project called “One Village One Product”⁷ is a compelling example, as it links a holistic approach of economic development with a focus on local products. This concept originated in the 1980s in Japan, with a group of women producing home-made biscuits and selling them in the local market. As the product gained ground in the market, the women involved learned new skills such as bookkeeping and marketing, rapidly improved the quality and packaging of their products, and continuously tweaked their products to satisfy the expectations of their customers. The project is now implemented around the world by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), in partnership with the authorities as a mix of skill-development programs and place-based promotion of the products.

Notes

- 1 This chapter is inspired by Vuignier's article (2017) and doctoral dissertation (2018).
- 2 “Fribourg devient une marque” [The Swiss canton of Fribourg becomes a brand], article published in the newspaper *La Liberté* on November 29, 2022. In the same vein, “Geneva Is Now a Brand” was the title of an article published in the newspaper *Le Temps* in 2010, when a new logo and nametag for the international promotion of Geneva were presented.
- 3 World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), 2015.
- 4 See: www.jeruzalem-slovenija.si/en/collective-trademark/ for more information on Jerusalem, Slovenia.
- 5 See Marque Bretagne, Code de marque www.marque-bretagne.fr/code-de-marque/#signs.
- 6 See Oslo Brand Box www.oslobrandbox.no.
- 7 See “One Village One Product: How a Japanese idea is changing lives and helping rural communities” published on May 8, 2017: <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/one-village-one-product-how-japanese-idea-changing-lives-and-helping-rural>.

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Part II

Main features of place branding and marketing

As extensively developed previously, the first part of our book relates mostly to the theoretical and conceptual bases of place marketing and branding, addressed through a public-policy perspective. The second part focuses on the main features of place branding and marketing, as presented in Figure II.1. While we do not argue that such elements are completely absent from “traditional” public policies, we will show how they are much more present and central in place-branding and -marketing processes.

First, the notion of place is obviously of primary concern to researchers in the field of place branding and marketing. Its characteristics, both tangible and intangible, play a central role in how places are promoted and how they influence the perceptions of residents, talents (workers with specific, high-level skills), companies, and tourists, and may contribute to the creation of a place brand. As a result, the features of a given area are essential from a place-branding and -marketing perspective for at least three reasons: (1) they provide arguments for enhancing the attractiveness of the place; (2) they relate strongly, in most cases, to the identity of the place; and (3) they constitute a playground for place-brand builders and managers, since these characteristics, while they cannot be ignored, can be changed or transformed in certain cases. All these points, as well as the attempts to better define places, are covered in Chapter 5.

Second, a marked feature of attractiveness policies, compared with other policies, is the multiplicity of actors involved, with numerous internal and external stakeholders. The success or failure of place attractiveness depends significantly on the positive or negative role played by these stakeholders, since they can foster or inhibit initiatives launched by the political authorities. Chapter 6 presents a definition of stakeholders, their relationship with the various functions fulfilled by places, and finally the analyses that can be conducted on their role and influence in place attractiveness matters.

Third, strategies to position and promote a place call for clear setting of priorities regarding the objectives to be reached and the selection of target groups. This prioritisation process is especially important in marketing and branding places, as it relates directly to the goals that authorities want to achieve in terms of place attractiveness and development. It involves three distinct levels: (1) the policy level (political agenda-setting); (2) the application of policy activities through a

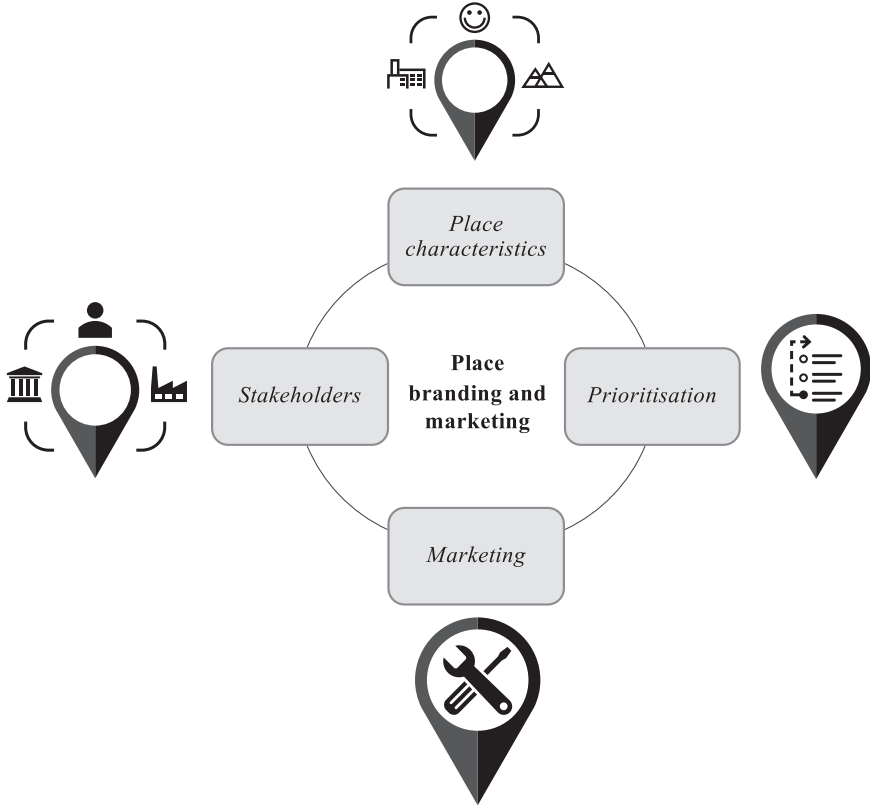


Figure II.1 The main features of place branding and marketing from a public-policy perspective

strategy; and (3) the selection of the most relevant target groups based on the priorities and the objectives set, the activities planned, and the resources available. All these aspects are addressed in Chapter 7.

Finally, marketing and branding processes, which are typically non-dominant issues in public policies, matter significantly for the development of place attractiveness. In Chapter 8, we complement the discussion on how marketing and branding can be translated in day-to-day operations in the public sector, how they can be used to enhance the popularity of public policies and administrations, and how they have developed in place branding and marketing more specifically. The last section is dedicated to marketing and branding tools. Focusing on places requires an adaptation of the so-called “4Ps” model (that has now been extended to 5Ps or 7Ps) typically found in the marketing literature. This adaptation, and the presentation of the marketing instruments related to this model, should always consider the specificities of places.

5 Place in attractiveness policies



5.1 Introduction

The notion of place is obviously central in place-branding and -marketing literature, as well as in policy documents related to attractiveness. Multiple contributions have attempted to define the term, focusing variously on its geographical and conceptual borders, on its legal characteristics, on its tangible and intangible attributes, or on the emotions related to it (the “sense of place”). Drawing on several fields ranging from management to geography and marketing, this chapter adds to the existing state of the art through a global approach to the notion of place, its role in public policies, and especially its centrality in attractiveness policies. It also provides illustrations of how the concept has been addressed both by academics and by governments in diverse contexts. Multiscalarity is of particular interest here, as it shows that places are “complex public objects to manage” (Pasquier and Vuignier, 2018). It points to the multiplicity of actors and the need to reconsider institutional boundaries, as business clusters and the provision of services increasingly expand beyond local, regional, and even national borders.

5.2 What is a place?

The first reference used to present the most defining features of places is the chapter by Warnaby and Medway (2021), who conceptualise places based on prior work by Agnew (1987). The conceptualisation includes three dimensions:

- *Localisation* refers to the geographical coordinates of places, or their exact localisation on the Earth’s surface;
- *Locale* relates to social relations and the way people conduct their lives, leading to the “actual shape of place” (Cresswell, 2004);
- *Sense of place* refers to people’s feelings about a place, their emotional attachment, and the way they identify with a place. It also relates to perceptions of people who have never visited a particular place: the words “Rio” or “New York” evoke sets of meaning associated with films, series, or advertisements.

The notion of place can be grasped from a tangible perspective (a place's position on the map and its "material" characteristics—buildings, infrastructure, services, etc.) and from an intangible, immaterial perspective (based on people's experiences or perceptions). Place is addressed mainly from a relational point of view, since it evolves continually based on community and place-making practices, which can occur at/between different institutional levels or scales. In addition, these relations may make places more appealing to certain groups than to others, which may also vary over time. The various events held in a same area, at different times in the year, with diverse targets and audiences, illustrate the changing nature of places. Both material and immaterial dimensions are affected, as both the place's arrangement and setting (e.g., use of the place's square, type of goods sold, etc.) and experiences lived may vary according to the period of the year and the activities organised. In this regard, the image of a place may differ from one person to another and from one group to another, depending on the cultural offer at the time of visit or the specific areas where residents live or companies invest/locate their activities. People who visit a city well known for its Christmas market will certainly enjoy a completely different experience at another time of the year, and residents certainly feel different about the city, reflecting the various emotional attachments that can bind individuals to a place. We can add the well-known example of the Oktoberfest (beer festival) in Munich, Germany. In this sense, the kind of social relations that develop within a place affect both the development of that place and the feelings attached to it.

An illustration of this idea of place creation and re-creation was provided by Cresswell (2004) when he presented historical changes that took place in the New York's Lower East Side area. There was a park named after the US Vice-President Daniel Tompkins, built in the 1830s. While it had been the site of demonstrations by unions and anarchists, in the 1960s it became the epicentre of counterculture and artistic expression. As the area became newly respectable in the 1980s, there was a sharp increase in property prices and, as a result, homelessness. Later, numerous community gardens in the area were sold off to developers in a wave of privatisation and destroyed. Some were preserved, however, and later became wild-nature reserves or were used as a place of memory for immigrants or to hold community meetings. Cresswell (2004) explained that tensions related to the gentrification of the area—mainly due to antagonism between the homeless, who sought to secure a place for the night, and residents, who wanted a safe, attractive place to live and raise their children—typically show how places are "made, maintained and contested" over time (p. 5). Fields that have been the scene of battles constitute another example of how places get "practised" and "shaped" by human activities, attributing diverse meanings to them: a field on which a war was fought acquires a particular character, becoming a unique kind of place in people's minds.

Warnaby and Medway (2021) add that such an approach does not solve the issue of place boundaries. They use the notion of "territory" to explain that traditional conceptualisations typically point to clearly defined administrative jurisdictions, such as municipalities, states, provinces, or cantons, and of course nation-states.

This is also the case of special economic zones such as business improvement districts (BIDs) or exclusive economic zones (EEZs) on seas. However, the marketing and branding of places cannot be restricted to this administrative–institutional approach. Indeed, many places’ boundaries result from interpretation and negotiation as well as cross-border activities (in several European states) or coherent tribal/linguistic spaces in former colonised states (e.g., in West Africa). At the regional level, Paasi (2002) identifies four “shapes” that help distinguish places from others based on:

- *Territory* (clearly defined territorial borders);
- *Symbols* (names, flags, landmarks);
- *Institutions* (specific administrative bodies);
- *Identity* (people’s identification with the nature, culture, and regional life).

The second source we use here, Langenbach’s chapter on place (2018), tackles the same issue in a similar fashion. It explains that by definition, places are multidimensional and hence should always be addressed through three perspectives: first, a material perspective, based on the concrete reality that assigns the name to a given place; second, a psychological perspective, based on the emotional relationships between humans and their place; and third, a representational perspective, based on the social and cultural representations that give concrete meaning to a place. While geographers initially addressed places as areas, focusing on their geological features, places are now increasingly studied through their social and institutional components, thereby giving a significant role to human activities and humans–place relationships.

According to Moine (2007), places encompass the complexity of the relationships between all places’ actors, residents, objects, and institutions within geographical spaces. They are “lived spaces”, shaped by human interactions that lead to specific representations. Relying on this social and institutional approach, Langenbach (2018) explains that places have three main characteristics: (1) *materiality*, that is, the place where people have developed their history, their language, their accent, and so on; (2) *projection*, that is, the place where people live and exchange with others, give meaning to their existence and action; and (3) *specificity*, that is, the place where people acknowledge a difference, mainly based on recognised borders, both internally and externally. These characteristics raise four main issues that help define what a place is.

- The first issue refers to the “bifacial” reality of places, since they are material and immaterial. Indeed, places are created and recreated both by resources (e.g., environmental) and by the capacity of individuals and groups to mobilise them. In this regard, Langenbach (2018, p. 20) argues that places are “objective and objectivised”;
- The second issue has to do with the appropriateness of places, meaning that limits and borders can be defined according to various criteria: historical, cultural, ethnic, religious, political, or natural. Mechanisms of appropriateness can range

from land ownership to representations that can be either operative or immaterial. Place naming plays a part in this logic of appropriateness;

- The third issue refers to spatial configurations such as continuous or discontinuous territories (e.g., with exclaves, archipelagos, etc.). The recognition of a particular type of configuration, and the properties associated with it, will both influence and be influenced by resources, practices, and human activity in general;
- The fourth issue involves the “self-referencing” character of places. Here, Langenbach (2018) explains that studying the relationships between people and places includes three main dimensions: *objective* (place materiality), *subjective* (based on experiences and feelings), and *conventional* (the identity shared by the place’s actors).

Langenbach (2018) also rightfully points to diverse entry points to the notion of place. From an economics point of view, local development and inequality issues lie at the core of most studies. Researchers in geography tend to focus on the geological and material components of places, but social geographers now increasingly emphasise the central role of human actors. From a management perspective, places are addressed as complex objects to be managed (Pasquier and Vuignier, 2018). They include various structures and a plethora of stakeholders at different institutional levels (local, regional, national) and sometimes beyond through organisations that transcend institutional borders (e.g., supra-regional agencies in charge of exogenous economic promotion, such as Basel Area). Finally, in place marketing, the analysis focuses on both the supply side (what places can offer) and the demand side (the desires of target groups). This approach highlights the centrality of three aspects: the definition and promotion of a given place identity; well-planned, consistent mobilisation of place actors; and the promotion and implementation of relevant projects.

The third source used in this chapter relies on the economy of place branding. Focusing on the municipal level, Anttiroiko (2014) shows that context matters significantly and that cities should be studied from an “urban asymmetry” perspective. This asymmetry characterises all cities, based on various aspects, ranging from population size to economic strengths, and from accessibility to infrastructure. It triggers inter-city competition, mostly between places that share similar characteristics, since

territorial communities have features that differ from each other to such an extent that it makes their position dramatically different, as if they were playing a different game or at least had completely different manipulative power over the rules of the game.

(Anttiroiko, 2014, p. 31)

Therefore, places (cities in this specific case) are mainly defined through their relative position in global competition, drawing on findings from economic geography literature.

This approach has a direct effect on how place-branding strategies can be addressed, since the appeal and magnitude of promotion and attractiveness depend on places' capacity to create, develop and promote themselves. In this regard, Jansson and Power (2006) propose three categories of places at the local level, based on their respective capacities: global cities, regional centres, and peripheral cities. Again, places are defined through their belonging to a certain scale, which will then define their target audiences and the channels they can use to attract such targets. Together with these characteristics and their location on different scales in global competition, Anttiroiko (2014) explains that cities can also be gathered in ideal-typical groupings, based on specific profiles. Cities are then defined as service-oriented, industrial, or agricultural, forming clusters around finance, high-tech, knowledge, culture, conferences, tourism, hubs, and business. All these characteristics are usually captured in rankings, which classify cities from best- to worst-performing places in each of these clusters.

This approach to place, and to cities in particular, is also preferred by Price and Benton-Short (2007) in their work on immigration. They claim that, among metropolitan areas of more than 1 million inhabitants, "places as gateway destinations for immigrants" can be hyper-diverse gateways, non-global gateways, or bypassed cities. "Hyper-diverse gateways" are places where more than 9.5% of the people are foreign-born, that receive immigrants from all over the world, and that are more diverse in terms of immigrants' countries of origin than "non-global gateways". In "bypassed global cities", less than 3% of the population is made up of foreign-born residents, as in the case of Mexico City, Seoul, and Cairo. Again, this approach focuses on scales and the comparability of cities in the global competition and race for place attractiveness.

To conclude this brief overview of the definitions of places, we want to particularly emphasise the multidimensional character and complexity of places. While it remains difficult to precisely define the boundaries of the "place" concept, we argue that tangible and intangible aspects should always be considered; human activities that shape and give meaning to a place should always be taken into account; and although certain attributes can help in comparing places, they should always be studied from an evolutionary perspective, as most places are subject to change and (re)creation processes. Moreover, these aspects contribute to define the "place of places" in global inter-place competition and vice versa, as competition may influence the way places grow and develop. Figure 5.1 provides a visual representation of the diverse approaches to "place" presented here.

5.3 "Place" in public policies

In this section, we address the role of places in public policies from two angles: politico-institutional and economic, since these two perspectives prevail in the policy papers related to places specifically.

While places can be defined as a combination of material elements, meanings, and practices (Cresswell, 2008), from a public-policy perspective, places and territories are mostly addressed in institutional terms. Indeed, institutional

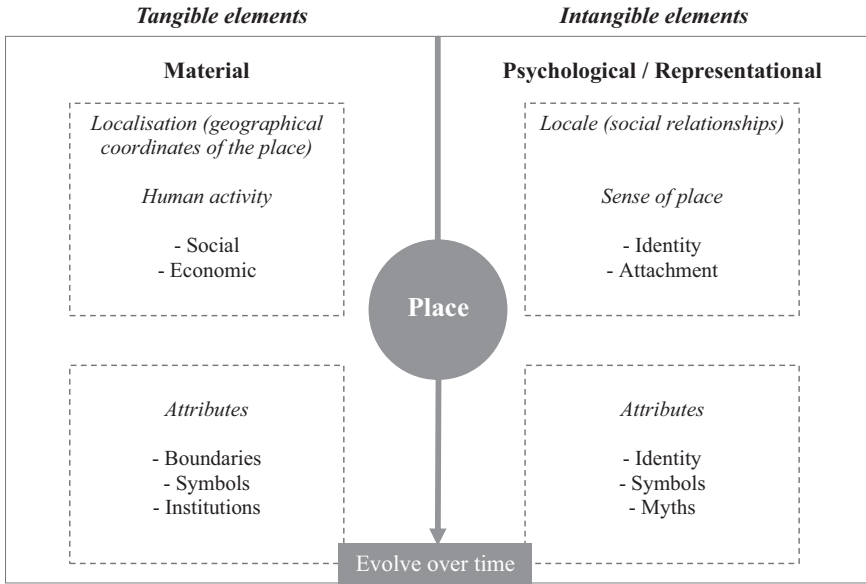


Figure 5.1 Characteristics of the main approaches to the “place” concept used here

levels are a main starting point for policy analysis, especially in political science. Although disputed, several definitions of institutions include aspects related to “rules that determine opportunities and incentives for behaviour” (Rhodes et al., 2006, p. xiii). This focus on rules and norms means that policies, and the services provided to citizens, emanate from jurisdictions with clearly established boundaries, either at the local, regional, national, or supranational level. The type of bodies in charge and their institutional level may vary from policy to policy and from country to country, depending on their politico-administrative systems. For instance, while cities and regions may have a large degree of autonomy in policy-making in some countries, in others the situation can be completely different, with large cities having limited autonomy. In this regard, Cairney (2020) highlights the importance of both policy conditions and the environment, writing that “policy-makers operate within the context of rules, norms, and cultures that influence their behaviour” (p. 95).

The role and responsibilities of government levels regarding public policy are often addressed in the literature. This results mainly from their evolutionary nature, as these roles and responsibilities are frequently contested in practice through calls for greater decentralisation. In many states, regional (and sometimes local) authorities want to increase their autonomy by designing themselves the services they provide to their population. This issue, studied in many fields (urban governance, federalism studies, public administration, political geography) also relates to local democracy and the legitimacy of local governments (Ladner and Keuffer, 2021). Institutions, rules, responsibilities, and policy scope are thus connected: policies

and services are designed and delivered at different institutional levels, usually referring to jurisdictions with clearly established territorial boundaries.

While many countries are directly affected by the centralisation-decentralisation tension, it often occurs in unitary states, where power is more concentrated at the top. This has been the case in France for a long time (Muller, 1992). In federal states, such as Switzerland, the regional entities (cantons) already have a large degree of autonomy, for instance, regarding the police. Their functional responsibilities also include managing hospitals and tax collection. All these rights are guaranteed by cantonal constitutions. Interestingly, place attractiveness is a cantonal as well as a local prerogative, as both cantons and municipalities can develop their own policies, based on their resources and objectives. In certain federal systems, though, entities can sometimes challenge the existing distribution of responsibilities. In Belgium, regions and communities hold diverse responsibilities for dealing with the language issue, in a very complex and fragmented institutional system. Such regions and communities are supraregional structures, located between the regional (provincial) and the national level. Certain political parties and intellectuals often call for a reform of the state, which would lead to the transfer of selected responsibilities from, for example, the communities to the regions (in the “regionalisation” scenario).

The increased popularity of intermunicipal and interregional structures should also be noted. In Switzerland, for example, intercantonal entities help define policies that apply to several cantons, such as education policies. The “Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Directors of Public Education” has been set up to ensure consistency in the whole education system. In addition, diverse intercantonal conferences of public education, based on linguistic criteria, guarantee coordination between the different cantonal systems (primary and secondary school, training of teachers, digital education, etc.). Since the 1990s, several contributions have focused on the supranational level, more specifically on intergovernmentalism through the multi-level governance (MLG) approach developed by Marks (1993). MLG is defined by Zürn et al. (2010, p. 4) as “a set of general-purpose or functional jurisdictions that enjoy some degree of autonomy within a common governance arrangement and whose actors claim to engage in an enduring interaction in pursuit of a common good”.

This MLG approach was first used to capture developments in EU policies and service delivery in the late 1980s, especially after the adoption of the Single European Act. It addresses the diffusion of power down to local governments as well as up to supranational institutions, such as the EU. In this regard, McGinnis (1999) writes that overlapping arenas of authority and responsibility exist at all scales that range from local communities to central governments and to informal governance arrangements at the global level. He adds that “a sharp contrast is drawn against the standard view of sovereignty as connoting a single source of political power and authority that has exclusive responsibility for determining public policy” (McGinnis, 1999, p. 2). The implications for policy design, and more significantly for policymaking, involve the increasing role attributed to civil society (development of policy alternatives, legitimacy of policy positions) and private actors (expertise, resources, and managerial capacity).

This diversity of stakeholders, further discussed in the next chapter, implies the diffusion of power and a different approach to the territorial aspect of policies, expanding beyond the traditional institutional levels presented previously (national, regional, local). The multiplicity of arrangements between these institutional levels and of actors has therefore changed the way policies and services are delivered, with a focus on the role of private companies and third-sector organisations. However, many authors emphasise that most public policies are still designed and implemented at the regional level and that the most salient ones remain at the national level (Hix, 2010). With regard to place, the approach we have presented focuses on institutions and is drawn mainly from political science literature. It will be complemented here by an economic perspective on the role of place in policy-making.

Contributions in the field of economics address places in public policy from a different angle. Starting from the numerous inequalities that affect places, economists propose another analysis of policies and service delivery, known as the “place-based” approach. Indeed, the services provided, and the opportunities offered by places, especially at the local level, vary strongly from one municipality to another, thereby leading to inequalities and dissatisfaction among the population. In European countries, Ehrlich and Overman (2020, p. 145) write that “spatial disparities across EU metro areas are profound, persistent, and may be widening”. Several authors have thus called for policies that (1) focus on the well-being of the population, based on their specific needs; (2) promote local initiatives through experiences that involve all the relevant stakeholders, especially residents and local authorities; (3) increase the budget for local projects and involve more deeply the elected into the design of these projects; and (4) favour local services, based on the needs expressed by the population (Algan et al., 2020).

Place-based policies have been defined as “policies that *explicitly* target the spatial allocation of economic activity” (Ehrlich and Overman, 2020, pp. 137–138). More specifically, they refer to

government efforts to enhance the economic performance of an area within its jurisdiction, typically in the form of more job opportunities and higher wages. . . . Alternatively, place-based policies may seek to enhance even further the economic performance of areas that are already doing well.

(Neumark and Simpson, 2014, p. 1)

Most programmes that rely on these policies regard job creation as their main goal, with the priority of reducing local unemployment (Kline and Moretti, 2013). Recent attention has been given to place-based policies, for example, in the United States, where the Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration made awards to 21 regions through a \$1 billion “Build Back Better Regional Challenge”.¹

From a statistical point of view, place-based analyses, when conducted in Europe, often rely on a specific approach to places: the nomenclature of territorial

units for statistics, known as NUTS, developed by Eurostat.² As a result of the systematic collection, development, and harmonisation of European regional statistics, NUTS regions have been categorised according to their socio-economic characteristics: the 92 NUTS 1 regions are major socio-economic areas (e.g., Bavaria, Flanders), the 242 NUTS 2 regions are basic areas for the application of regional policies (e.g., Upper Bavaria, Antwerp province), and the 1166 NUTS 3 regions are the smallest areas, typically used for specific diagnoses (e.g., Munich area, Antwerp area).

In the view of certain economists, place-based policies should be implemented to maximise growth and welfare (Oliveira Martins et al., 2010). They argue that spatial and territorial dimensions should be considered when designing economic policies, since differences in terms of human capital, infrastructure, innovation, and the quality of institutions should be taken into account. Again, the analysis of economic policies relies mainly on institutional levels (jurisdictions with clearly established boundaries), such as the NUTS regions or the territorial levels of the OECD when including non-EU member states. These territorial levels (TLs) have clear institutional borders: TL1 refers to the 38 OECD countries, TL2 to 433 large regions (e.g., Länder in Germany or provinces in Canada), and TL3 to 2414 smaller areas (e.g., administrative districts in Germany, census divisions in Canada).³

However, in most cases, economic policies targeting the development of places do not match with institutional borders. Examples include, at the supranational and supranational levels, the Interreg European grant scheme. This scheme supports economic development based on cooperation mechanisms between regions in neighbouring states or between countries (e.g., the Interreg North Sea Region includes Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France). It is a part of the European Structural and Investment Funds, aimed at promoting a sustainable and healthy European economy. In the United States, large-scale government efforts have promoted economic development through investments in infrastructures. A notable example is the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), a federal initiative that dates back to 1933 (Neumark and Simpson, 2014). It was designed to modernise the economy of the area, which comprises parts of Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, and Mississippi, through large public infrastructure spending. Today, the TVA provides electricity for 153 local power companies and serves 10 million people.⁴

At the local level, several programmes also target specific areas with no legal institutional borders. For instance, in France, support for urban revitalisation and the reduction of inequalities is ruled by the “priority neighbourhood” policy. The neighbourhoods directly affected do not correspond to the city boundaries because they are defined by residents’ income (in comparison with the median income) and poverty rates. In Wallonia, Belgium, private companies and investors can receive financial incentives if they settle in a *zone franche*. These *zones franches* extend within a radius of 40 km around the location of firms that have made major collective layoffs. Since these examples relate to endogenous economic development, they share similar characteristics with attractiveness policies.

5.4 Place in place branding and marketing

The notion of place is typically regarded as a starting point for any study focusing on branding and/or marketing of cities, regions, and countries. Warnaby and Medway (2021, p. 9) argue that it is “an essential precondition for developing any understanding of place branding and marketing, whether this be at the localised street-level, or—at the opposite end of the spatial scale—nationally or supra-nationally”. Places have a central role because they convey images and hold attributes that may be promoted. These two aspects are linked, since the commodification of certain attributes serves to promote a positive image of a given entity. Attributes, usually connected to selective elements that characterise places, are used recurrently in place marketing, mainly because they help in setting priorities and target audiences.

One of the main difficulties lies in the absence of clear boundaries. This is the result of at least four factors: (1) overlap, confusion, and sometimes disagreement about an entity’s boundaries (Warnaby and Medway, 2021); (2) the development of economic and social activities beyond the recognised administrative jurisdictions; (3) the creation, as mentioned, of tools that target specifically (mostly poor) areas to support economic development; and (4) the fact that places are being “constantly rewritten (for better or worse) by the creative force of human actions (intentional or unintentional, constructive or destructive)” (Warnaby and Medway, 2013, p. 357). In this regard, it is often argued that the socially constructed nature of places makes it difficult for marketers to promote them as “other products”, since interrelated and sometimes competing narratives provide extreme complexity when it comes to projecting a universal “place image”. While place marketers often perceive a potential absence or loss of a clear identity as a danger or a risk, inauthenticity and the exclusion of alternative narratives, especially those from local stakeholders, should also be avoided.

The great variety of attributes can explain the complexity of places. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, they range from material (e.g., boundaries and institutions) to immaterial attributes (e.g., myths and traditions). In the place-branding and -marketing literature, they have been addressed from various perspectives, depending on the perspective preferred. From the promotion/advertising angle, attributes are of three kinds (Wilson, 2021): (1) functional, that is, tangible, resources and infrastructure; (2) symbolic, that is, social approval, satisfaction, and the value given to a location; and (3) experiential, that is, feelings related to the place (hospitality perceptions, ease of doing business). Attributes play a major role in this literature since they are closely related to the chosen strategy, which must guarantee congruence between the projected image of a place and its identity. They can be used and analysed for both tourism (destination) and investment promotion. Wilson (2021, p. 251) provides a list of these attributes, which has inspired the development of Table 5.1.

The complexity of places can also be addressed through their multiple tangible and intangible aspects. Vuignier (2018) provides an extensive list of these aspects. They range from history and geopolitics to quality of life and traditions, sometimes

Table 5.1 Place attributes

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Tourism</i>	<i>Investment</i>	<i>Residents</i>
<i>Functional</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure (airports, public transport, internet, etc.) • Facilities (shopping malls, restaurants, hotels, etc.) • Recreation (parks, museums, historical sites, etc.) • Landmarks/flagship monuments • Environment (cleanliness, pollution, climate, etc.) • Natural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility (airports, railway system, roads) • Knowledge resources (local partners, synergies, availability of skilled workforce, etc.) • Market attractiveness (access to domestic and regional markets) • Economic governance (quality of governance and economic policies) • Natural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure (airports, public transport, internet, etc.) • Facilities (shopping malls, restaurants, hotels, etc.) • Recreation (parks, museums, historical sites, etc.) • Education and health system, safety • Environment (cleanliness, pollution, climate, etc.) • Natural resources
<i>Symbolic</i>	Self-perceptions of travellers regarding the destination (foodie, adventurer, etc.)	Core values of the location brand (e.g., innovativeness) and perceptions of relevance and credibility	Self-perceptions of residents regarding their place of residence (open, safe, enjoyable, etc.)
<i>Experiential</i>	Friendliness, diversity, etc.	Management style, local workers, and so on	Harmony, safety, quality of life, opportunities, and so on

Source: Based on Wilson (2021)

with inspiring slogans or taglines connected to them (Table 5.2). They are central in place-branding and -marketing studies and practices. Indeed, the double nature of places (material and immaterial) make them especially difficult to address as a “product” that can be sold to targeted actors. As already highlighted in Figure 5.1, both tangible and more symbolic aspects evolve over time, resulting from social construction and appropriateness processes. Consequently, places are multifaceted; their identity may evolve; and they are strongly influenced by internal struggles, power relations, and political issues.

We do not wish to assert here that places’ complexity is never accounted for in public policies, since more functional spaces such as metropolitan areas (that go beyond institutional borders) are also considered by scholars and practitioners. However, we argue that complexity is much more pronounced in place branding and marketing, at least in two dimensions. The first dimension relates to the issues of identity and image. Vuignier (2018) writes in this regard that both place identity and attachment evolve over time and cannot be easily managed by place marketers. This complexity is reinforced by the multidimensional and polymorphous

Table 5.2 Main dimensions of places and selected slogans

<i>Place dimensions</i>	<i>Selected campaigns/slogans</i>		
<i>Tangible</i>	<u>Geographic, geological, geopolitical</u> Nature: mountains, lakes, sea, forests, air quality, and so on Geopolitical: political boundaries and geostrategic situation Competitiveness	“Switzerland: get natural” “Europe’s West coast” (Portugal) “Panama—the road less traveled”	
	<u>Political, institutional and legal</u> Political, administrative and legal system	“International city of peace and justice” (The Hague, Netherlands)	
	<u>Economic and societal</u> Socio-economic situation Economic competitiveness of the place Infrastructures	“Boundless freedom” (Florida) “Ireland: innovation comes naturally” “The oil capital of Canada” (Edmonton)	
	Cultural and sports activities, events	“Divers’ paradise” (Bonaire)	
	<u>History/historical events of the place</u>	“Unforgettable memories carved in stone” (Petra, Jordan)	
	<u>Social and cultural</u> Social cohesion	“A connected community” (Norwalk, CA)	
	Culture and traditions	“Peru, the richest country in the world”	
	<i>Intangible or hybrid</i>	<u>Symbolic construction/identity aspects</u> Place attachment Traditions/myths	“Valais. Engraved in my heart” “Nottingham, home of Robin Hood”
		Figures of the place Heritage Quality of life	“Três Corações, a terra do rei Pelé” “Egypt, where it all begins” “Tout vivre en Côtes d’Armor” (Brittany)

Source: Based on Vuignier (2018)

character of places (second dimension). Places represent at the same time social interactions and a sense of belonging, a space where people live, and a space for economic activity. The identity issue is essential, since it is directly connected to the emotions and symbols used in the development of place brands. As mentioned in Part I of this book, these brands are often mobilised, more or less intensively, in the attractiveness strategies deployed by places.

Identity is already a complex concept in itself, one that depends heavily on individual determinants, as well as social, cultural, and contextual factors (see, e.g., Erikson, 1968). We will not explore all of these aspects here, as we will focus solely on the relationship between identity formation/evolution and places. In this regard, Lévy and Lussault (2013, p. 999) argue that places are “an arrangement of material and symbolic resources capable of structuring the practical conditions of existence of an individual or a social collective and to inform in return this individual or social collective about their own identity” (our translation). The meaning constructed and given to a place by the different actors contribute to shaping its identity, as explained by Relph (1976, p. 3): “a place is not just the ‘where’ of something; it is the location plus everything else that occupies that location seen as an integrated and meaningful phenomenon”. Therefore, identity is a multidimensional construct composed of attachment, sense of belonging, relationships between actors, and relationships between actors and their surroundings. Oliver (2016) shows that in place-branding studies, the issue of place identity refers to five main characteristics: (1) the role of residents as identity holders; (2) the role of residents as co-producers of place identity; (3) the role of communication; (4) the pluralistic, fluid, and evolutionary nature of place identity; and (5) the centrality of the temporal, spatial, and social contexts.

These characteristics of place identity are linked with place-branding activities. As explained by Vuignier (2018), the involvement of stakeholders and the importance of both contextual elements and attributes are central components of any attractiveness strategy. This results from the major role played by place image and reputation, which can certainly leverage the attractiveness of a given place. The consensus around a shared identity, usually driven by a coalition or structure made up of local/regional actors, shows a clear relationship between place identity and the creation of a place brand. This shared identity, ideally based on participatory governance modes and therefore built on perceptions of a wide range of stakeholders, is then communicated and managed by the local or regional structure set up to increase the place’s attractiveness. However, the creation of a place brand, and its promotion both within and outside the defined borders, may sometimes focus on specific actors that are specifically targeted by the branding process. In the Swiss canton of Valais, for example, the brand mainly gathers tourism and economic-promotion actors, and on quality labels for typical products of the place (Michelet and Giraut, 2014). The success of this brand relies on another central aspect: the recognition, inside as well as outside the canton, of a place perceived as homogeneous and whose attributes are quite clearly identified by internal and external actors (see Chapter 4).

The crucial difference between identity and image must be reiterated here. Identity refers to attributes that, ideally, are commonly picked as defining features of a place. It should serve to inform attractiveness policies, with the goal of eventually increasing the overall attractiveness of the place. In contrast, image combines identity, based on specific attributes, with the perceptions and feelings of internal and external actors (Montgomery, 1998). Residents, tourists, and investors may each have a different image of a place, one that also differs from the identity projected by the place brand. Wilson (2021) argues that advertising plays an important role,

since place promotion serves as an image-building function, especially in the case of business location and investment. Therefore, monitoring the image of a place has become a central activity for many regions and countries, as illustrated by the Swiss case. Switzerland monitors how the country is perceived abroad through image studies and analysis of foreign media coverage. Analytical tools include perception measurement among the general public and opinion makers and media analysis and social listening (on social media).⁵

In addition to identity and image, the prevalence of multiscalarity in attractiveness policies is a second distinctive feature of place branding and marketing. The choice of a “place of action” involves a problem of spatial proximity but also the emergence of places perceived and built by various actors on a shared space. At the crossroads between institutional and constructed perimeters, the role of places as an object of management, as a scene of action, as a support for governance, and as an aggregator of resources seems obvious: places should be addressed as a “territorial arrangement”. Such an arrangement, based on a given or a created set of heterogeneous resources—both human and spatial, sometimes linked to technologies, skills, and knowledge—must be managed accordingly. Place-branding and -marketing approaches must account for these arrangements. Raulet-Croset (2014) explains this evolution towards overlapping territorial scales by an increasing demand for more flexible places of action. She also states that the complexification of territorial spaces and the less important role played by institutional borders, especially at the local level, are a direct response to demands for places that are more functional from an economic and social point of view.

However, experience shows that while the definition of a “place of action” looks great in theory and can produce real effects in practice, it does not suffice to decide on a new delimitation of spaces that generate local cooperation. It must be accompanied by other levers of cohesion and dynamism, and this points to the necessity of addressing places as objects to be managed. Place branding can help in this matter: it may bring stakeholders to the table to define the relevant boundaries of the place for the purpose of developing and promoting activities that benefit (and retain) internal actors and attract external actors. However, place branding refers to what Raulet-Croset (2014) calls the “ascending logic”, when a place is mainly constructed by stakeholders, who collectively define the most functional and relevant space to be promoted. She asserts that there is also a contrasting “descending logic” that relies on a “prescribed” approach to places. From this alternative point of view, attributes play a major role in the definition of places’ boundaries, especially material ones (e.g., topography). Nevertheless, these two dimensions—prescribed and constructed—often combine through co-creation processes that involve the stakeholders concerned with the development of a place. In this regard, Leloup et al. (2005) underline that governance processes involve both coordination between various actors and construction of a territoriality linked, in particular, to the sharing of proximity resources between these actors, thereby producing a “permanent social construct”.

This notion of social construct was raised in the late 1990s, promoting the idea of creation and recreation of places based on multiple material and immaterial factors. For Tuathail (1998, p. 90),

territory and territoriality are not discrete ontologies but social constructions entwined with technological capabilities, transportation machines, . . . political authorities and economic networks. Human society produces, reworks and, creatively and otherwise, destroys territory and territoriality.

In place branding, it is vital to consider these dynamics of change, as well as spatial configurations, and the interdependencies between actors. Pasquier and Vuignier (2018) explain that in these new configurations, or the “new structures that complement the existing structures” (p. 33), cross-border cooperation mechanisms and projects have led to the creation of urban spaces, such as the Trinationnal Eurodistrict around the city of Basel (an area that includes parts of France, Switzerland and Germany) and Grand Genève (Greater Geneva area, which includes parts of France and Switzerland). The latter example is discussed in Box 5.1.

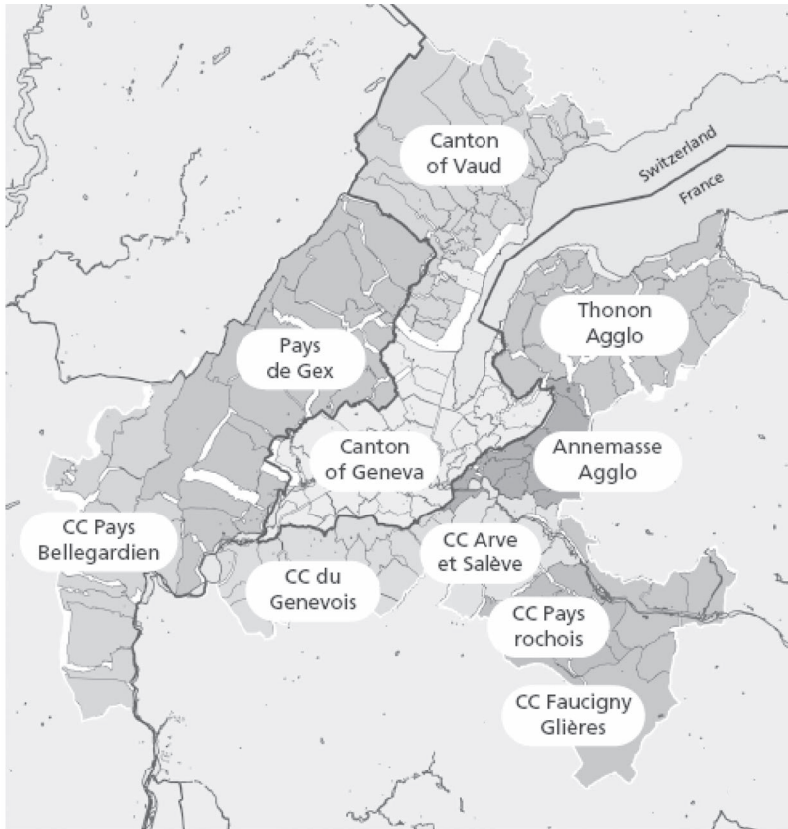
The development of new structures, and the definition of relevant boundaries, is a political, institutional, and managerial challenge faced by numerous regions. Regarding places of life, functional spaces, administrative perimeters, fiscal divisions, electoral districts, or polycentric networks of cities, solutions must be found without hindering the global coherence of regional development. In Switzerland, for example, the risks of fragmented and inconsistent spatial development have been addressed through an initiative launched at the various institutional levels (including the Federal Council, the Conference of the Swiss cantons, and the Association of Swiss municipalities). Entitled *Projet de territoire Suisse*, it lays the foundations for a reconfiguration of space into places of action that go beyond traditional borders. The New Regional Policy of the Swiss Confederation goes in the same direction: it encourages sub-national entities to design projects (or support them through incentives, coaching, and networking) of a strong economic nature, such as regional innovation systems, with the dual objective of reducing disparities and fostering economic development.

Managerial implications include the tension, for place managers, between pure coordination and decision-making in their role. As the “territory” of managerial action is often intertwined between various public policies and divided by several institutional borders, place managers must adapt to new governance processes and rules. This makes it indispensable for them to deal with inter-organisational and contractual partnerships, as well as networking for the strategic design and implementation of various policies. Enlargement of the policy toolbox, through, for example, the creation of place brands, also results from the multiplication of intertwined spaces. In the Swiss case, cantonal brands seem to be the most popular, such as Valais, “Vaud+, terre d’innovation” and “Fribourg, terre de valeurs”. The case of Geneva is interesting, as it highlights the potential discrepancy between public policies, institutional perimeters, and the delimitation of the place as a marketing object. This example is presented in Box 5.1. It is followed by the examples of Galicia-North Portugal in Box 5.2, based on Oliveira (2016), and VAUD+ (Box 5.3).

Box 5.1 The “Grand Genève” (Greater Geneva) area

As mentioned, the case of Geneva is extremely interesting from a place-branding and -marketing point of view, since it can simultaneously refer to the city of Geneva, the canton of Geneva, the international capital, or the Geneva-Vaud-French agglomeration that was formed under the name “Grand Genève” (Greater Geneva) in 2012. Compared to the city of Geneva, which comprised around 200,000 inhabitants in 2021, this area has more than a million inhabitants in 209 municipalities.⁶ The agglomeration promotes itself as one of Europe’s most dynamic areas, boasting more than 500,000 jobs, an international airport, and a well-performing, cross-border public-transport network. Several infrastructures, projects, and policies are jointly managed by Swiss and French entities. In Switzerland, the partners involved are the city and the canton of Geneva, the Nyon region (in the canton of Vaud), and the canton of Vaud. On the French side, the partners include the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, the Genevois français metropolitan area, the Haute-Savoie department, and the Ain department. Based on the commitment to improve air quality, the Greater Geneva Pact has been supported by European funds for a three-year period (2020–2023): the project received € 958,653 from the European Regional Development Fund, complemented by federal funds (CHF 200,000) and cantonal funds (CHF 911,000).⁷ A map of the Greater Geneva area is presented in Figure 5.2.

From a place-development perspective, the discrepancy between the necessary public policies and institutional perimeters can limit the implementation of certain measures. First, while cross-border cooperation is a reality, certain inhabitants of the Nyon region, surveyed in past studies, have expressed difficulty in identifying themselves as being part of the Greater Geneva area. While they live only a few kilometres from Geneva, their perceptions can be explained by historical, political, and cultural factors. Second, while cross-border cooperation seems to work effectively in certain cases, such as the police and the judiciary (common interventions of law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border, mixed brigades, etc.), it is much more difficult in other cases, such as taxation. Third, the multiplication of administrative boundaries makes it difficult to implement large-scale projects. For instance, the development of cross-border public transport projects is often hampered by political considerations and national interests. Indeed, the discrepancy between political constituencies and functional spaces allows a small minority of residents to block the construction of park-and-ride facilities (Vuignier, 2015). In addition, the choice of manufacturer for cross-border railway lines is also hampered by considerations of national interest. In this regard, the Swiss railway company has recently ordered 23 trains from Stalder, a Swiss firm, while the French railway company has ordered 17 trains from Alstom.



In Switzerland: Canton of Geneva and Canton of Vaud
 In France: Pays de Gex, Thonon Agglo, Annemasse Agglo
 (community of agglomerations) and CC (community of municipalities)

Figure 5.2 The Greater Geneva area (Grand Genève)

In terms of place marketing, joint communication efforts at the level of the Greater Geneva area already exist, especially through the logo and the website dedicated to the area (consisting of various written and audio-visual documents), but they did not grow as a real strategy. Projects aimed at attracting and retaining visitors come from the cantons or from collaboration between canton(s), municipalities, and private actors, such as the GENEVALIVE brand developed by the Geneva Tourism & Congress Foundation, now “GENEVA. VISIT. MEET. REPEAT”. This branding focuses primarily on tourism. At the regional level, other brands include Vaud+, which will be explained further in the following (Box 5.3). At the Greater Geneva level, promotion relies mainly on project communication and a main

resource entitled “A cross-border vision for the Greater Geneva Area”. The strategic plan for 2016–2030 includes promotional actions that consist of information communicated to public-transport users, discussion forums organised by neighbourhood associations, and project communication on the Internet/on flyers distributed to all households.⁸

Box 5.2 The Euroregion Galicia-North Portugal

The Euroregion Galicia-North Portugal spans 51,000 square kilometres. It encompasses Portugal’s northern region, home to approximately 3.7 million inhabitants, and the autonomous community of Galicia in northwest Spain, which has a population of approximately 2.8 million. Cooperation between the two regions has flourished based on their cultural and geographical proximity, bolstered by the spatial contiguity of the urban axis between the Galician city of A Coruña and the Portuguese city of Aveiro. Furthermore, the closely related languages of Portuguese and Galician, as well as their strong social, cultural, and economic ties, have reinforced cross-border cooperation and regional integration.

Despite being geographically located at the periphery of Europe and within their respective countries, both regions are undergoing significant economic transitions, shifting from their traditional agricultural specialisation to a modern, service-oriented, technology-based industry. This transformation is primarily driven by progress in advanced technical textiles and sea-related economic activities. The sea-related economy includes aquaculture and commercial fishing, which have flourished in coastal waters. Galicia, for instance, has over 60,000 fishers and 4000 boats engaged in this activity. The Euroregion has become a hub for research and displays a unique and well-preserved ecosystem. For example, the Iberian Nanotechnology Institute in the Portuguese city of Braga plays a fundamental role in developing new ecological and technological products. The region also offers a range of tourist destinations, such as the Historic Centre of Porto and the Douro Wine Region (UNESCO World Heritage Sites). In Galicia, the ancient pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela drew in half a million pilgrims in 2022.

The Euroregion has facilitated better-quality public services and has encouraged dialogue, building trust and mutual understanding among the population. For example, the B-Solutions program has streamlined administrative procedures for cross-border workers. The region also pioneered the IACOBUS Program in the EU, which aims to promote cooperation and exchange between human resources of higher-education institutions and technological centres in the Euroregion. Cross-border institutions have created a new strand of relations and everyday interests, culminating in a more integrated

and cohesive community. Thus, the impact of cross-border cooperation on the Euroregion's political, administrative, and social landscape is significant.

With a long history of cultural and commercial connections, the Regional Coordination and Development Commission of the North of Portugal (CCDR-N) and Xunta de Galicia, a collective entity with executive and administrative powers, established the Galicia-Northern Portugal Working Community in 1991. The primary aim of this community was to enhance and utilise shared resources, a goal that has since been significantly achieved. In 2006, the European Union (EU) introduced territorial cooperation tools with legal statuses, such as the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation, to remove the obstacles to cross-border cooperation. Consequently, in 2010, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Galicia-Northern Portugal (GNP-EGTC) was established through the European Territorial Cooperation Agreement between the CCDR-N and the Xunta de Galicia. This milestone marked the formalisation of years of healthy trade, labour-force exchange, and cultural relations between these regions, thus opening a new chapter in cross-border cooperation.

The primary objective of an EGTC is to broaden and develop shared border areas towards improving connectivity, enhancing socio-economic and institutional integration, promoting employment, reinforcing competitiveness, and promoting territorial cooperation. Along with the common institutional backbone of the GNP-EGTC, this Iberian Euroregion shared the Joint Investment Plan and the Smart Specialisation Strategy for 2021–2027. During the new EU programming period for 2021–2027, Smart Specialisation will continue to play a significant role in regional development and cohesion. One objective is to enhance sustainable growth by utilising by-products and wastes from production chains linked to the sea as components in cosmetic products, food additives, and pharmaceutical applications. Another key objective is to establish aquaculture as an international benchmark in new technology-based products.

The Joint Investment Plan of the Euroregion Galicia-North Portugal 2021–2027 is aimed at establishing a sustainable, competitive cross-border destination for financial and human capital based on shared spatial qualities and regional identity. It strongly emphasises increased cooperation between private sector actors, recognising them as critical players in driving economic growth and innovation. Additionally, the plan underscores the importance of autonomy in financing initiatives and the potential for experimentation in combining the dimensions of collaboration and INTERREG (one of the EU's critical instruments supporting cross-border cooperation through project funding). The plan also aims to find common solutions in various sectors such as health, environment, research, and education.

While a formal cross-border branding strategy has yet to be established, the Joint Investment Plan acknowledges the crucial role of place branding in regional and local development. It also underlines the role of a branding

strategy in promoting the region's creative and technology industries, the quality of health and education facilities, and the region's environment. The initiative Two Countries, One Destination, forged by Xunta de Galicia and Eixo Atlántico, a cross-border association of this Euroregion, has gained momentum, particularly for religious tourism. It involves cities like Almeida (North Portugal) and Ciudad Rodrigo (Galicia). The many joint strategies developed since the establishment of the Working Community in 1991, including those mentioned previously, unite these regions and provide the cohesion and distinctiveness necessary for a place brand to flourish. Developing a place brand and cultivating the public perception of it for the Euroregion must therefore involve strong interaction and participation from regional stakeholders, including the media. This interaction, coupled with resource and content sharing, enhances the building of Euro-regional public awareness. It fosters the development of a shared identity and socio-economic and cultural assets, especially in cross-border clusters such as tourism, health, sea, and textiles.

Developing a cohesive and compelling place-branding strategy for the Euroregion Galicia-North Portugal is crucial in promoting its competitive edge and enhancing overall socio-economic conditions. Despite the differences between government systems, the GNP-EGTC could take the lead in developing a place-branding strategy for the Euroregion. Citizen engagement and the involvement of public and private sectors appear fundamental for a successful cross-border Euro-regional brand strategy. However, bringing all regional actors together to share the same vision and branding propositions is a formidable challenge. While the GNP-EGTC is well positioned to coordinate joint branding efforts, it will need more budget and decision-making capacity if it is to drive a long-term place-branding strategy beyond tourism.

A cross-border branding strategy is crucial for sustaining an integrated, multifaceted approach to regional development, including employment, support for businesses, heritage conservation, tourism, and so on. In addition, it could expedite discussions about trade and infrastructure development, such as the ongoing deliberations regarding the implementation of a high-speed railway connection between the two regions. Although implementing such a strategy would require strong efforts from regional stakeholders, it nevertheless has the potential to be a long-term plan that could foster a distinctive, positive, and competitive cross-border regional reputation globally. By aligning goals and strategies, and leveraging the shared natural and cultural heritage, this Euroregion could create a powerful and cohesive brand to enhance its attractiveness.

Box written by Eduardo Oliveira.

Box 5.3 VAUD+

The *VAUD+*, *terre d'inspiration* brand was created in 2020 by the canton of Vaud. This brand, which incorporates the Swiss flag (through the “+” that follows the canton’s name), builds on a place-branding project that was launched in 2014. That project sought to bring together all the economic, tourist, and political actors from various institutional levels, with the aim of defining a common strategy. The main outcome targeted by this initiative was effective coordination in the place’s promotion. The case of Vaud sheds some interesting light on the multiplicity of structures that have to cooperate in the context of place marketing to both attract and retain various target individuals and groups.

Through the *VAUD+*, *terre d'inspiration* brand, a label—“certified from here”—has been created. This label guarantees both that the item was produced in Vaud and that its raw materials are from the area. It is thus a guarantee to consumers of the proximity, diversity, authenticity, traceability, and quality of Vaud products. The label also provides an opportunity to support the know-how of local agricultural actors and businesses. In terms of communication, the brand links the diverse actors involved (tourism, economy, education, culture, etc.) with consistent, original, harmonised messages and visuals from the various bodies that promote the place.

Paradoxically, however, the multiplicity of structures that contribute to place-promotion efforts tends to diminish this intended harmony, with the involvement of a wide range of public, semi-public, and private actors. Economic promotion includes an endogenous part dedicated to companies already established in the canton and to local entrepreneurs that wish to start a business. This part is mostly managed by the Service for Economic and Innovation Promotion (SPEI), which is a part of the cantonal Department of the Economy, Innovation, Labour, and Heritage (DEIEP). It is interesting to note that the DEIEP is the direct contact provided on the website dedicated to the Vaud+ brand. The exogenous part of economic promotion focuses on international targets. This implies cooperation between the cantonal agency for innovation promotion (Innovaud, which is in charge of promoting Vaud abroad and attracting foreign companies in the canton), inter-cantonal organisations (such as the Greater Geneva Berne area, GGBa), and national organisations (such as Switzerland Global Enterprise, S-GE).

In the field of tourism, national organisations promote Switzerland as a destination (the Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau, Switzerland Tourism), while local organisations (such as Lausanne Tourisme and Vaud Promotion) are responsible for defining specific offers appropriate for visitors, whether business or leisure tourists. The Vaud Promotion association is in charge of increasing the reputation and attractiveness of the canton through

the VAUD+ brand. Achieving this goal requires close collaboration with economic actors, regions, and institutions involved in promotion efforts and also through locally provided activities, products, and services (academic, touristic, cultural, sports, etc.). Partners of Vaud Promotion include the canton of Vaud authorities, the departments in charge of economic promotion, Swiss Tourism, the Swiss Federation for Tourism, the national railway company, the cultural actors and attractions, associations in specific sectors (hotels, restaurants, wine producers, schools, and clinics), and all tourism actors at the local level. A map of Switzerland highlighting the canton of Vaud's situation is presented in Figure 5.3.

Therefore, the economic-promotion activities deployed and the launch of the VAUD+ brand highlight multiscalarity—the fact that several territorial scales are intertwined—and multiple positioning issues that match with the diverse strategies implemented so far. These strategies address various external and internal target groups by positioning themselves differently (Vuignier, 2018). In this respect, branding a region (in this case the canton of Vaud), tends to be more complex than branding a city or a country, the latter generally having a strong image (Rochette et al., 2015), in the current nation-led globalised world. The cantonal brand is thus dependent on both the city-branding processes initiated by cities in the region and by nation-branding efforts deployed by the country. In this regard, the fact that the VAUD+ brand logo incorporates the Swiss flag only accentuates the reference to the country as a whole. Vuignier (2018) conducted a study on the brand's potential effect on investors and on companies' willingness to locate their activities in the canton of Vaud. The results show that the brand was perceived by study respondents as something different from the cantonal borders, referring to a wide, vague space. In their minds, the “Canton of Vaud [VAUD+ logo]” relates to Switzerland, to a region that includes Lausanne and, for some, to Geneva and to the canton of Vaud. In this sense, Vuignier

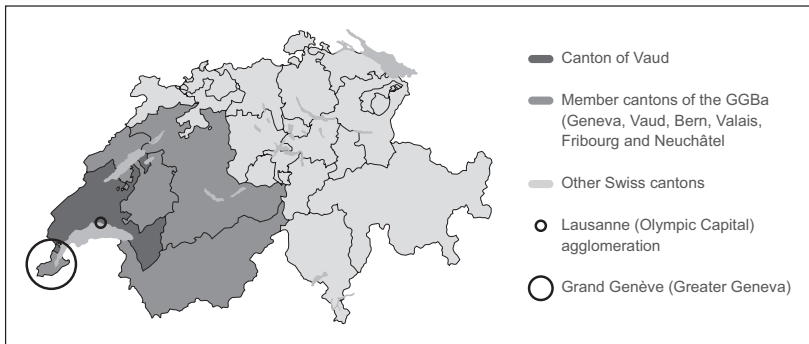


Figure 5.3 Map of Switzerland and the Greater Geneva Bern area, the canton of Vaud, and Grand Genève (Greater Geneva)

(2018) stated that multiscaleity implies that the factors related to locating a business in a certain area may come from a different institutional level than the one from which the place brand originates. Indeed, the VAUD+ brand conveys multiple assets of a place that extends beyond the cantonal borders. This observation corroborates Dinnie's analysis (2018), which argues that the construction of a place brand may involve elements that are not limited to a given administrative territory.

Notes

- 1 Parilla, J. & Muro, M. (2022). *The Build Back Better Regional Challenge Marks a New Era of Place-Based Industrial Strategy*. Washington, DC: Brookings. www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2022/09/02/the-build-back-better-regional-challenge-marks-a-new-era-of-place-based-industrial-strategy/ (accessed 25.01.2023).
- 2 Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/background>.
- 3 Source: www.oecd.org/cfe/regionaldevelopment/territorial-grid.pdf.
- 4 Source: www.tva.com/about-tva.
- 5 Source: Swiss Confederation, Présence Suisse, Monitoring and Analysis: Switzerland's Image Abroad Including Image Studies and Analyses of Foreign Media Coverage of Switzerland: www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/foreign-policy/landeskommunikation/monitoring-analyse.html.
- 6 Source: www.grand-geneve.org/les-communes-du-grand-geneve/.
- 7 Source: www.interreg-francesuisse.eu/beneficiaire/pacte-grand-geneve/#.
- 8 Source: www.grand-geneve.org/wp-content/uploads/projet_territoire-grand-geneve_2016-2030.pdf.

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6 Stakeholders in attractiveness policies



6.1 Introduction

A place is not the property of a single actor. Inhabitants, companies, associations, and of course institutions all contribute to give a place a unique character. Everyone is concerned with the space in which they live. Besides, the place-branding and -marketing literature includes many contributions that emphasise the role of stakeholders in attractiveness policies. For instance, authors refer to stakeholders as central actors in the conception phase of a place brand, in the “living” of that brand, and in the shaping of the place brand through their respective perceptions (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2021). Stubbs and Warnaby (2015) explain that a wide range of actors—people as well as organisations—can influence the successful or failed development of a place. Warren and Dinnie (2018, p. 303) add that “cities are continuously made and re-made in the image of those who promote them”, thereby highlighting the importance of stakeholders (at the local level in this case). This chapter starts with a definition of stakeholders, continues with the relevance of considering stakeholders in public policies and place attractiveness especially, and provides examples as well as tools to stimulate stakeholder engagement.

6.2 What are stakeholders?

Broadly defined, stakeholders can be any individuals, groups, or organisations that either have an influence on or are impacted by the output or outcome of a project, activity, or decision and are interested in the success or the consequences of that project, activity, or decision. Stakeholder theory was connected to strategic management from the very beginning, when scholars regarded stakeholder involvement in projects as a way to organise information for strategic planning purposes. These early developments were aimed at increasing the effectiveness of business policies and strategies. However, the term stakeholder usually points to Freeman’s book (1984) entitled *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. As a normative paradigm, stakeholder theory builds a broad/holistic perspective based on value networks, from which shared purpose and values emerge, in contrast with a narrower or more reductionist perspective, in which the value is mainly financial and would benefit only the shareholder. This normative rationale relies on the fact that stakeholders have a right to be treated as an end in themselves, and not as

a means to other ends, “and therefore must participate in determining the future direction of the firm in which [they have] a stake” (Evan and Freeman, 1988, cited in Donaldson and Preston, 1995, p. 73).

The main expectation relates to the creation of value, since the increase of stakeholders’ motivation will result from their involvement in projects, activities, or decisions. This focus on actors differs significantly from the perspective of maximisation of return on investment, as it posits that managers not only have a duty to their shareholders (owning financial shares and expecting returns) but that they should also bear relations of trust to the company’s stakeholders. As a result, from an instrumental point of view, success in terms of profitability, stability, and growth should follow (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). From a normative perspective, stakeholder theory implies the acceptance that all stakeholders have legitimate interests in essential aspects of corporate activities, that they can be identified by their interests in a given business, and that businesses have corresponding interests in them. In other words, each stakeholder group merits consideration and should be managed accordingly.

However, this broad, positive approach and the rather vague definition provided previously may render stakeholder theory inoperative. For this reason, subsequent contributions have refined the definition of stakeholders as follows:

- *Broad v. narrow.* The involvement of multiple individuals, groups, and organisations may bring confusion; narrow definitions propose concentrating exclusively on parties connected to an organisation through fiduciary obligations or contracts.
- *Categorisation.* Stakeholders can be categorised according to their perceived role or influence: primary or secondary, active or passive, institutional or social, compatible or incompatible, and so on.
- *Derivative stakeholders.* Certain individuals, groups, or organisations can either harm or benefit an organisation but have no direct moral obligations (e.g., the media). They should be accounted for, as they can sometimes influence decision-making processes.
- *Scope.* Several contributions propose including non-human actors in the analysis, such as the environment; while they cannot express their interests, these interests can be reached through the expectations of stakeholders.

These definitional and conceptual efforts have led to the creation of analysis grids, mainly in the private sector. Such analyses typically start with the definition of phenomena more likely to be impacted by a decision or action. The identification of stakeholders (affected by or likely to affect this decision or action) makes up the second step, while the third step usually involves the prioritisation of the stakeholders, according to their role and influence (Reed et al., 2009). These analyses mobilise diverse tools and techniques such as:

- *Formulation of the problem/issue at stake.* This includes, for instance, stakeholders’ relative power v. their interests (through an analysis grid), influence diagrams, or finding the common good/the winning argument.

- *Development, review and adoption of a proposal.* This refers to the clear definition of stakeholders' support, hindrance, and role regarding the proposal made by an organisation, and to the analysis of the proposal's attractiveness in view of each stakeholders' capability.
- *Creation of participation planning.* This involves the creation of a matrix for planning stakeholder involvement over time; changes may occur at any time and should always be accounted for.
- *Monitoring of policy implementation.* This involves the updating of databases related to stakeholders' role and involvement in policies, through power-interest diagrams or action plans, especially in the public sector.

As a final note to this section on stakeholder definition and analysis, let us point out that roles, status, and involvement may change over time. In this regard, Friedman and Miles (2002) provide a compelling example of this evolutionary view. In the case of Greenpeace, the authors explain how this non-governmental organisation (NGO) was depicted as "radical" by companies and the media when they campaigned against businesses after their establishment in 1971. However, this perception started to change after the bombing of Greenpeace's ship by French secret service agents and the killing of a photographer. These events led to a sharp increase in membership and a shift of the organisation's image in the media. As a result, other organisations' initial reluctance to integrate Greenpeace as a stakeholder transformed into a less confrontational approach. Nevertheless, a backlash movement emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s that portrayed environmental groups as threats to society, jobs, and traditions. Greenpeace was even called an environmental terrorist organisation, ignorant of social issues (Friedman and Miles, 2002). This resulted in the sharp decrease of members, especially in the United States (from almost 1.85 million in 1991 to 355,835 in 1998). Finally, the increased sensitivity to environmental issues, inherited from the ecological disasters of the 1980s, growing concerns about sustainability, and the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 have had a major effect on corporation-NGO relationships. This change gave birth to a large share of ethical investment and collaborations. The choice between activism and institutionalisation facing NGOs remains at the core of current debates. This is illustrated by the case of sustainable finance, where civil society stakeholders' involvement ranges from contributions to "greenwashing" (Delmas and Burbano, 2011) to calls for radical action.¹

6.3 Stakeholders in public policies

As mentioned, stakeholder theory and analysis first burgeoned in the private sector, focusing primarily on helping company managers make better decisions and generate value for companies through the value created for customers, suppliers, financiers, employees, and communities (Freeman, 2017). From the non-profit sector perspective, businesses are usually regarded as hostile, since they are often the target of campaigns organised by NGOs, for example. However, companies are proving increasingly central for non-profit organisations, as they

have more material and financial resources. In turn, businesses tend to balance the importance of certain NGOs and their potential influence, as an overly confrontational position towards, for example, social or environmental causes may lead to problematic levels of dissatisfaction among customers. In addition, the lack of expertise (for example, on minimising their ecological footprint) sometimes encourages companies to collaborate with NGOs more closely—to help decrease the negative impact of their activities on the environment, for instance (Harangozó and Zilahy, 2015).

From the public-sector perspective, stakeholders are the people, groups, and organisations related to policy making and thereby given consideration by political leaders and public managers. The increasing interconnectedness of public problems of all kinds calls for a thorough stakeholder analysis: delivering effective and responsive services requires an understanding of the expectations of all parties (Beach et al., 2009). It should be noted here that citizens are increasingly shifting from a passive to an active role: we are witnessing the development of tools designed to favour their participation in decision-making processes (public conversations, consultations, etc.), going beyond representative politics. These new forms of participation, relying on transparency and collaboration (Longo, 2017), seek to capitalise on the opportunities offered by new information and communication technologies (ICT), including blockchain and the Internet of Things. Concepts such as co-creation, co-production, and co-design of public policies and services between governments and citizens have therefore been raised to promote effectiveness in service delivery and social innovation. In this regard, citizens are encouraged by governments to develop innovative urban services, as in the case of “urban living labs” that have been set up in several cities (Nesti, 2018).

While stakeholders can be regarded and analysed from diverse points of view, here we prefer the public-sector perspective, since governments are often considered the focal point for administering and sometimes monitoring the attractiveness efforts deployed by places. Local, regional, and national authorities, driven mainly by competitiveness concerns, tend to promote, market, and brand their territories consciously and systematically (Ripoll González and Gale, 2020). The role of governments involves their legal powers and their legitimacy, as well as their mission to improve the well-being of their citizens and the economy of their municipality, region, or country. In democratic systems, elected officials may be sanctioned if such a mission is not fulfilled, mainly through not being re-elected. However, we do not want to give the impression here that governments launch and lead attractiveness policies in isolation. Rather, they increasingly rely and even depend on a myriad of actors, as emphasised by Eshuis et al. (2013, p. 508): “Place marketing is about developing a place that fits the needs and wants of citizens, visitors, and investors”. Consequently, stakeholders’ engagement in place marketing and branding is key to the success of attractiveness policies (e.g., Casais and Monteiro, 2019), especially when place-branding processes serve to build a strong sense of community around the place concerned (Stevens et al., 2021).

The involvement of numerous actors in public policies dates back to the 1960s, as mentioned by Randma-Liiv and Lember (2022, p. 1):

Public participation in governance has been on the public administration research agenda for more than 50 years. The public participation discourse was spurred on by the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s . . . and was further legitimised by the “deliberative turn” in democratic theory, which had reached maturity by the 1990s. More recent theories on public participation have increasingly focused on the role of participatory policy making in good governance.

This notion of governance can also be used in all public, corporate, and non-profit worlds. According to Pinson (2002), it represents the transformation of an over-valued role of political steering activities into a dynamic combination of diverse regulation modes (state, networks, markets, communities) to build the social order. Bevir (2012, p. 1) defines governance as “all processes of governing whether undertaken by a government, a market, or network, whether over a family, a tribe, formal or informal organisation, or territory, and whether through laws, norms, power, or language”, thereby implying the implication of multiple parties, which can take different forms and which can be organised or intertwined to a greater or lesser degree.

In the public sector, governance refers to the focus on practices, networks, and activities rather than on the analysis of structures and institutions. In this sense, stakeholders pay more attention to processes and interactions that characterise public policies and practices that they want to influence, mostly based on their specific interests. The realisation by governments that they cannot solve all issues alone, especially wicked problems, has contributed to the creation of networks, because it became indispensable to connect people across several levels of government and to mobilise numerous stakeholders. Other drivers to the flourishing of multi-stakeholder governance structures include a lack of resources or inadequate distribution of resources, prior failure to address issues in certain sectors, network connectedness opportunities, increasing levels of societal conflict and trust, and the difficulty of addressing the diversity of situations within a jurisdiction (Emerson et al., 2012). According to Cerda-Bertomeu and Sarabia-Sanchez (2016), the public sector plays a central role because it initiates, in most cases, place-branding projects and controls how budgets are assigned. The governance structure can be either top down (vertical), characterised by strong governmental leadership, or bottom up (horizontal), when place brands grow around a dialogue between stakeholders. The literature now insists more clearly on the need to integrate stakeholders in place-development processes early on, since they constitute essential partners that may endanger the stability of these processes in the later stages or create missed opportunities in the long run.

Since the monopoly on the general interest does not belong to the state, other actors—public, private, or non-profit—have on the one hand developed their own vision of the aims and objectives of public action, and on the other hand, they now

feel legitimate in expressing these visions. While stakeholders should be involved in the early stages of policymaking, Riege and Lindsay (2006) argue that clear communication regarding outputs and outcomes is equally important, especially to make public organisations more dynamic and competitive. Engaging stakeholders is also expected to restore trust in policymakers, stimulate novel solutions, and share knowledge and expertise through more sustained interactions while increasing democratic quality. Moreover, the interdependence of actors within networks may also generate more accountability and mutual trust, thereby helping to address the multiple and sometimes opposing policy objectives formulated by stakeholders (Randma-Liiv and Lember, 2022). All these elements point to the central role of stakeholders in producing, designing and implementing public policies in an age of governance. In this regard, Riege and Lindsay (2006, p. 27) write that stakeholders' impact on policies is evident when we consider the many interactions with diverse external stakeholders.

However, we argue in this book that place branding and marketing differ from public policies in different ways, including on the stakeholder aspect. This rationale relates here to the limited number of stakeholders involved in sectoral policies compared to the almost infinite number of stakeholders potentially involved in place development. In the context of the installation of a wind farm, many actors such as the regional administration, electricity companies at both the local and national level, environmental NGOs and consultancies, landowners, and the impacted community will be concerned. In transport projects, Macharis and Bernardini (2015) include society as a whole (including users), governments, operators, and investors. While this looks like an extensive list of actors, the variety in attractiveness policies is usually larger, as the field of place branding and marketing embraces a broader definition of stakeholders.

6.4 Stakeholders in place branding and marketing

In the place-branding and -marketing literature, stakeholders range from the general population, businesses, and government of a country, region and/or city to external actors such as tourists, investors, and talents. The numerous ramifications and impacts on the attractiveness of a place, and the necessity to include an equally large number of stakeholders, explain this broad approach. According to Hall (1999), such consideration of all parties involved in attractiveness policies is crucial, since strategic planning requires the strong connection of stakeholders in processes related to place promotion and regional development. Regarding tourism in particular, he adds that “like the environment, [it] should be regarded as a meta-problem which represents highly interconnected planning and policy messes which cut across fields of expertise and administrative boundaries and, seemingly, become connected with almost everything else”. (p. 276). Finally, he gives examples of partnerships established in the UK, mainly between public and private actors, that were heavily criticised for lacking a broad network of stakeholders and a solid institutional base to ensure shared visions about urban and regional development programs. In this regard, he argues that the “incorporation of a wider range

of inputs into the policy process would lead to the formation of issue networks” that would benefit these development programs (p. 285).

From a theoretical perspective, Jain et al. (2022) argue that place branding can be addressed through three dimensions, related to people, places, and their inter-relationships. This view relies on neo-behaviouristic approaches, which focus on internal cognitions, environmental stimuli, and behavioural responses. Since stakeholders can express different opinions and raise diverse interests, their inclusion is essential for forming a common vision of the place’s dimensions. Yet these dimensions relate to both the characteristics of the place and the way people experience and think of historical references, associations, and manifestations. How shared meanings connect with people’s cognition, behaviour, and experiences can diverge from one actor to another, which calls for a better understanding of stakeholders’ relationships with the place.

Also focusing on participatory processes, Stevens and Nafzger (2021) explain that hypotheses related to stakeholders’ expectations in place branding are grounded in specific theoretical approaches. For instance, analysis of the relationships created via networks, and the related dynamics of benevolence and trust, can be shaped by social-capital theory. In the same vein, opportunities offered by networks to reconcile stakeholders’ views and their willingness to get involved in such networks can be analysed in the light of the advocacy coalition framework. As often repeated in the literature, finding a theoretical justification for stakeholder theory remains a daunting task; however, we do believe that recent approaches to governance structures and dynamics across organisations provides a clear rationale for the inclusion of multiple stakeholders in policymaking. We are in line with Anttiroiko (2014), who states that removing place-development policies from the grassroots-level reality may cause economic issues in the long term. He argues that “in the case of publicly funded investments it is ultimately the local community that pays the price if the bold endeavour proves to be a failure. Open discussion is needed as a form of community-based assessment” (p. 145), therefore implying the involvement of stakeholders in policymaking, especially citizens.

The importance of stakeholders is also highlighted by Jain et al. (2022, p. 73), who write that

implementation of place branding has become markedly focused, integrated and strategically oriented, thus creating cultural meaning. . . . This phenomenon has led to a significant rise in involvement of a place’s stakeholders: residents and visitors who have become knowledgeable, aware and willing to showcase the place that they visit or in which they reside.

Zenker and Braun (2010, p. 5) define place brand as “a network of associations in the consumer’s mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and general culture of the place’s stakeholders and the overall place design”. They continue by saying that many stakeholders are often missing in strategic plans, especially residents, due to a tendency to focus on tourism in most cases. Consequently, brand

communication remains too narrow to include the different perceptions expressed by the various stakeholders. Yet actors that could or should be involved in developing a place are multiple, as mentioned. Categories range from internal (public authorities, public administrations, companies established in the place, universities, the media, and, of course, residents) to external stakeholders, such as tourists, cross-border workers, talents, investors, and companies interested in relocating to a given place or businesses looking for places to launch new activities, develop an existing cluster, or revive a sector of their economy.

Stubbs and Warnaby (2015) aim at providing a global picture, based on their experience, that goes beyond the internal-external distinction made previously. They explain that the multitude of stakeholders results from the variety of functions fulfilled by places (not restricted to the selling or marketing of products as in the private sector) and the wide range of interests and views held by actors regarding a place's success and the ways to achieve such success. They list the following stakeholders as central in place branding: politicians and governmental organisations, infrastructure and transport providers, cultural and sports organisations, academic organisations and schools, promotion agencies, residents, businesses, and religious organisations in certain cases. The importance of stakeholders is also emphasised by de San Eugenio-Vela et al. (2020) in the case of the Empordà region. They argue that partnerships should be established to implement the storyline and management of a place brand, given the diversity of stakeholders involved. Stakeholders can also be categorised by their respective expertise. According to Sarabia-Sanchez and Cerda-Bertomeu (2018), actors with more advanced skills should intervene more intensely in the conceptual and strategic phases of place-brand design. These actors include mostly politicians, public officials, scholars, think tanks, and consultants.

In their study of the role of universities in place branding, Bisani et al. (2021) distinguish between what they call "primary" stakeholders (organisations that enforce the strategy and make decisions and individuals in such organisations) and "indirect" stakeholders, which often depend on the decisions made by institutional actors. The study includes a large number of stakeholders, ranging from local governments (politicians and economic-development office) to businesses (companies and consultancies), universities, communities (arts groups, bloggers, small-business owners), and the voluntary sector (rural-development agencies, foundations, town-promotion groups, tourism-promotion groups). A more comprehensive approach emanates from Warren and Dinnie's work (2018) on cultural intermediaries in place branding: as stakeholders in the branding process of places, they list marketing and public-relations (PR) staff, brand consultants, administrations and politicians at all levels of government, economic-development and tourism agencies, residents, the media, and influencers who write about events and specificities of the place (food, nightlife, arts).

The main take-away from this overview of the literature points to the plethora of approaches regarding categorisations of stakeholders. However, all the contributions gathered here acknowledge the necessity of increasing participation and involving a large panel and variety of stakeholders in policymaking, especially attractiveness policies. In this regard, Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) propose

understanding place branding primarily as the result of dialogue, debate, and contestation between a place’s diverse stakeholders. Consequently, in Table 6.1, we provide a comprehensive view of all potential stakeholders to be considered in place branding and marketing. We want to make it clear that Table 6.1 is just one of the many ways in which all stakeholders in place branding and marketing can be represented. It does not show, for instance, how central these stakeholders are (primary or secondary), whether they are most likely to become target groups in most attractiveness policies implemented, or whether they are internal or external groups. Nor do we describe the roles of these stakeholders, that is, whether they are driving forces or whether they play a more passive role. Part of this choice relates to the changing roles of stakeholders in the process (their evolutionary nature, depending on the choices made by the driving force in the process). For instance, depending on the situation, elected politicians might be a central stakeholder or alternatively might step back and arbitrate decisions that involve other stakeholders, more active in the process. However, we do believe that distinguishing between the collective actors (public, private, or tertiary—NGOs, non-profit organisations, residents’ associations, etc.), as well as individual ones, and the main focus of the policies is essential if all stakeholders in place branding are to be listed.

While we are not going to explain the roles of all stakeholders listed in Table 6.1, we would like to provide clarifications. First, religious organisations may not be a “straightforward” stakeholder when it comes to place-branding processes. However, as highlighted by Stubbs and Warnaby (2015), these organisations can

Table 6.1 Stakeholders in place branding and marketing

Collective stakeholders — To what sector do most of these stakeholders belong?	<i>Public</i>	Governments, politicians, and public administrations at all institutional levels Economic development agencies at all institutional levels Transport and infrastructure providers Schools at the local level; universities mostly at the regional and national levels
	<i>Private</i>	Businesses, media, tour operators, investors, business clusters, and so on
	<i>Tertiary</i>	Association of residents, especially at the local level NGOs, chambers of commerce, associations, religious organisations, and so on
Individual stakeholders — To what sector do most of these stakeholders belong?	<i>Categories of individuals</i>	Marketing and branding experts: consultants, academics Tourists: leisure, business Diaspora/family reunification Residents: youth, students, unemployed v. workforce, talents, retired, and so on

sometimes influence the attractiveness of a place since they can lead to the enactment of stricter laws. They can also raise doubts in potential target groups regarding events organised by cities, regions, or countries, especially when the event's marketing campaign and sponsors may be contradictory with local customs. The 2022 football World Cup held in Qatar is an example of this phenomenon. Second, we do not account for overlaps in Table 6.1, but we acknowledge that local or regional economic-development agencies can be associated with marketing efforts deployed at the national level (Zenker and Jacobsen, 2015). Third, we also exclude stakeholders unable to make decisions, such as the environment, from our list. Fourth, we want to highlight the fact that residents cover a multitude of sub-groups and may refer to multiple individual initiatives. All these groups and initiatives may well be targeted by place marketers. Fifth, we want to emphasise that “businesses” as they appear in Table 6.1 include both existing companies located in the place and companies expected to relocate and/or invest in the place. Finally, we acknowledge that certain stakeholders belong to different sectors according to context (e.g., public v. private universities or public v. private media). For this reason, we have preferred the formulation “most of these stakeholders” in the first column of Table 6.1.

It is also essential to better understand the roles of these stakeholders and to distinguish them from what are commonly labelled as “target groups” in place branding. These groups are targeted among the variety of stakeholders that might have an impact or an interest in the place-branding process or might be more or less strongly impacted by the decisions made. In other words, these groups are targeted stakeholders; this means that certain stakeholders may be excluded from the process while they are (directly or indirectly) impacted by a place-development policy. In the literature, several scholars regret the absence of communication and the partial exclusion of certain groups, especially residents (Jain et al., 2022), as place development focuses mainly on external actors, such as visitors, to increase their attractiveness internationally (Braun et al., 2013). This phenomenon also raises concerns in the political world: former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that

building sustainable cities—and a sustainable future—will need open dialogue among all branches of national, regional and local government. And it will need the engagement of all stakeholders—including the private sector and civil society, and especially the poor and marginalized.²

The diverse roles of stakeholders have been described from various angles in the literature on place branding and marketing. According to Stevens et al. (2021), the diverging interests of stakeholders and their interactions will leave a trace on attractiveness policies—and governance structures—depending on how place branding is perceived by actors. Stevens et al. (2021) present three perspectives that help determine the roles played by all the actors involved. In the first scenario, branding acts as a *selling mechanism*; external stakeholders (companies, start-ups, investors) are the most targeted actors. Public organisations play a major role as they look

for unique selling points of the place and coordinate the marketing campaign. In the second scenario, branding serves as *value enhancer* for the place; companies located in the area make up the most strongly targeted group and join the campaign when they see the added value of marketing activities on their own activity. In the third scenario, branding acts as a *community builder*; since building a sense of community around the place is the main goal in this perspective, local communities are especially targeted in the branding campaign. According to these diverse scenarios, the role of stakeholder might change. For instance, the role of companies may switch from co-initiator of the place-marketing process to a passive role; while local communities are often excluded in the selling-mechanism scenario, they become central when the “community-building” perspective is preferred.

Cerda-Bertomeu and Sarabia-Sanchez (2016) propose a distribution of stakeholders’ roles based on the sector they belong to. In their view, public actors create networks between their politico-administrative structures and both private and social actors. The resulting governance structure should be based on a participatory process that grants legitimacy to the projects undertaken (Anttiroiko, 2014). Two main approaches dominate: top down, relying on strong government leadership to impose the authorities’ vision, mission, and planning regarding the place brand, and bottom up, in which the development of a place brand stems from a dialogue between all public, private, and social actors involved. Cerda-Bertomeu and Sarabia-Sanchez (2016) add that private actors can benefit and/or contribute to the place brand in two ways: companies can (1) help by better positioning their own brands under the umbrella of the existing place brand and (2) act as “ambassadors” for a place when there is (or when they show) a specific connection between themselves and the place. The interest for private actors of being involved is showcased in various examples. Private initiatives can also help promote a place, for example, in the case of Köln Marketing in Germany or Memphis Brand in Memphis, Tennessee (USA), as presented in Box 6.1. Finally, civil actors—NGOs, unions, citizen movements—have a special relationship with the brand and should therefore participate actively in place-branding processes. The literature dedicated to the role of residents, particularly as ambassadors and promoters of the place’s identity, is flourishing.

Box 6.1 When a non-profit leads the place-branding efforts: the case of Memphis, Tennessee

The second-most populous city in the state of Tennessee, Memphis is located along the Mississippi River. It is often regarded as one of the most historic and culturally significant cities in the country for its influence on music, food, and culture. The state’s largest African American population lives in Memphis, which played a prominent role in the American Civil Rights Movement. Baptist minister and activist Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis in 1968, and the National Civil Rights Museum was established in the city.

From an economic standpoint, the city has become one of the leading American commercial centres in transportation and logistics, the largest employer being FedEx Corporation, an American multinational company active in transportation, e-commerce, and business services. In this regard, Memphis is the world's second-busiest cargo airport. From a cultural and sports perspectives, the city has a rich musical legacy and is often nicknamed the "Home of Blues, Soul & Rock N' Roll", and the city's basketball team, the Memphis Grizzlies, plays in the National Basketball Association (NBA) league.

While the city has several entities that focus on communications, they each represent a targeted segment of the overall brand. For example, the City of Memphis Office of Communications was created in January 2016 to serve as a one-stop communications shop for all administrative divisions. However, while the Office communicates city government policies and decisions, it does not pay particular attention to overall branding efforts.

The marketing and branding task is performed by Memphis Brand, a non-profit organisation established in 2016. The organisation's board of directors is composed of 15 people, including public actors (e.g., representatives from the city of Memphis), private actors (e.g., the president of the Grizzlies NBA team), and associations (e.g., Latino Memphis). The idea of Memphis Brand began in the spring of 2014 when Memphis leaders from all backgrounds and perspectives came together with the shared goal of capturing and communicating the contemporary Memphis identity in a more unified way. Spearheaded by Memphis Tomorrow and guided by a steering committee led by ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and FedEx, the initiative culminated in the creation of a dedicated non-profit organisation with the mission to ensure Memphis' story is told in contemporary positive ways that attract talent, drive investment, and boost civic pride.

While a private-sector initiative, Memphis Brand has remained a multi-stakeholder effort, gathering multiple actors and representing the diversity of the city. Most of these stakeholders contribute to the marketing and branding efforts deployed by Memphis Brand, and they are very supportive of the activities conducted. Other sources of funding come from for-profit work (when Memphis Brand is hired by other organisations to support their own brands) and "in-kind support" (when people and institutions provide services for free, e.g., advertisement on local TV).

The notion of diversity is particularly important to emphasise in this case, since Memphis Brand wants to appropriately represent and involve all residents with a core ideal: that Memphis is where originality and soul come together to create change. This focus on soul results from a large-scale survey that revealed 97% of individuals have a positive association with the concept. Memphis Brand uses "Soul" in many slogans, such as "Bring your soul" or "Soul lives here". "Soul" refers not only to music but also to generosity, activism, spirit, and curiosity. Emphasising generosity, for instance, aims to highlight the fact that Memphis is the most philanthropic city in

America. Therefore, this focus on soul aims to extend the traditional narrow perception of Memphis focused mainly on music and elevate the city as a destination for entrepreneurs, activists, artists and innovators with a deep passion for diversity, inclusivity, and pride.

The idea that all stakeholders are represented and share a similar vision is captured in the public-facing “We Are Memphis” brand and social community powered by the Memphis Brand organisation. The marketing work is done by the chief marketing officer (CMO) and a staff of Memphians with diverse profiles representing various skills, parts of the city, and characteristics of the population (in Memphis, over 60% of the population is African American). A core philosophy of the work centres on uncovering the true essence of the city through storytelling and content rather than creating an artificial or unrealistic identity. The independent and non-profit character of the organisation also allows for more reactivity and for the possibility to tackle sensitive topics upon which the government might be hesitant to communicate (e.g., reporting and promoting activism). Memphis Brand can also communicate extensively about less popular topics (e.g., the entrepreneurial scene) and generally promote the untold stories of citizens doing remarkable things.

The marketing work relies heavily on data to measure its success and works closely with a research agency. An online survey, conducted twice a year, is sent to individuals locally, in target markets, and nationally. A detailed analysis of Memphis’ awareness, perception, and key attributes, including how the city compares to other US cities, is consistently measured. Other success indicators include media coverage and audience growth. As of 2022, Memphis Brand had generated over 350 positive stories equating to over 4.85 billion positive media impressions worth over US\$ 81.6 million in media value. Similarly, Memphis Brand reported 20% year-over-year growth in traffic to their site [WeAreMemphis.com](https://wearememphis.com), which sees half a million visitors a year. Finally, Memphis Brand generates approximately 15,000 leads each quarter of people interested in moving to Memphis as they work to attract people, especially younger individuals, living in more expensive areas who may be tempted to experience a more affordable life in one of the southern US states.

Of course, the Memphis Brand organisation also faces challenges. As a non-profit, there is often a primary focus on sustainability and the necessity to receive enough financial support to maintain a high level of activity to further develop existing projects and to design new ones. Moreover, while perceptions of Memphis are generally positive outside of the city, Memphians can be very critical of the city. In this regard, there is a need to change the negative perceptions and inform Memphians about their city’s positive evolution. Finally, the dynamic brand work requires both long-term dedication and quick reaction, as it is affected by crises such as crime or violence that may severely tarnish the place image.

Box written in collaboration with David French, CMO of Memphis Brand.
More information: <https://memphisbrand.org/>, <https://wearememphis.com/>.

Pasquier and Vuignier (2018) focus on target groups and make a distinction between internal and external actors. They argue that while marketing efforts should concentrate on residents internally, they should extend their offering to visitors when it comes to external target groups. Thus, actors in charge of these place-marketing efforts should focus on the tourism and events offering when turning to external target groups but should not forget residents and potential future inhabitants of the place, making sure to show the high quality of life they can expect. Regarding private businesses, Pasquier and Vuignier (2018) explain that, again, internal and external stakeholders should be distinguished and properly accounted for in place-marketing efforts. While the existing conditions and links with the place are of primary importance for companies already located in a given area, communication about fiscal policies, infrastructure, workforce, and general incentives should be emphasised when targeting new businesses.

Regarding the role of internal stakeholders more specifically, Golestaneh et al. (2022) show that certain roles are clearly devoted to public sector actors, such as identifying and assessing the perceptions of stakeholders, allocating and coordinating sources of funding, and so on. Some tasks are carried out together with the media (development and communication of a coherent and consistent message, creation of positive perceptions among internal stakeholders), others with the private sector (assessment of the actors' needs, formulation of an inclusive brand strategy), and others with a wider range of stakeholders (for example, contribution to the development and communication of the place brand's identity). This analysis indicates that alternative points of view can be applied to the identification of stakeholders' roles and also with regard to the actors' power, legitimacy and interests in the place-branding process. However, it does not give much importance to the role of residents, as emphasised in several recent contributions to the literature.

Indeed, as mentioned, many contributions now underline the increasingly central role that residents should play in place-branding and -marketing processes. Casais and Monteiro (2019) explain that the involvement of residents is crucial for at least four reasons. Indeed, in order to share values of friendliness and hospitality, residents must (1) hold a high degree of satisfaction with their authorities, (2) welcome the tourism policies developed in the area, (3) have an adequate understanding of the place brand, and (4) develop a strong sense of belonging to the place. In this sense, Braun et al. (2013) argue that residents play three major roles in the development of a place brand:

- *Residents as an integral part of a place brand.* Residents are essential for the formation of place brands, since they serve “as an indicator for the evaluation of place brands, as a justifier for place brand consumption and as a differentiating factor between place brands” (p. 20). This is vital, since local people's attitudes toward a place may influence the place's representation in the minds of external target groups;
- *Residents as ambassadors for their place brand.* Residents, especially at the local level, participate in the general communication effort about the place through word of mouth. Local people's informal accounts of a place's characteristics are considered highly authentic. The involvement of residents in the place-branding process can turn them into ambassadors;

- *Residents as citizens.* Finally, in democratic systems, residents exercise their voting rights to elect government officials, and can often participate in public debates. Place branding should be no exception in this regard. The main issue that arises from the exclusion of residents is the emergence of grassroots citizen movements that can launch “non-official” or “counter-branding” campaigns.

Several examples of citizen movements raising their voice against place-branding campaigns can be found in recent history. When the “I Amsterdam” brand was introduced, a group of residents reacted with a counter suggestion, “I Amsterdamned”. In Manchester, the McEnroe group, which gathered businesspeople, students and artists, torpedoed the “We are Up and Going” campaign launched by Marketing Manchester. Its opposition was based on its judgment that the campaign reflected poorly on the city’s image (Ward, 2000). In the small town of Heerlen, Netherlands, Van Hoose et al. (2021) write that the “Urban Heerlen” campaign that supported the city’s regeneration project raised criticisms of limited authenticity and inclusivity. In line with what has been mentioned, they conclude that residents (and their urban imaginaries) should be associated with the place-branding process in its early stages. Examples of residents expressing their unhappiness with the development of mass tourism and its negative side effects (rent prices, pollution, noise, etc.) abound. A typical example of protests is provided in Figure 6.1.

According to Klijn et al. (2012), because place brands depend strongly on changing meanings and associations in customers’ minds, and on emotional experiences, they are co-created by stakeholders. Institutionally, governance structures are



Figure 6.1 Residents contesting the development of boat tourism

Source: “Boat Tourism, Noise Pollution” ©The authors, 2023

created, and projects are developed in common. Stakeholders should be involved because the branding process will clearly benefit. This has legitimacy implications for public action, as underlined by Anttiroiko (2014), since stakeholders' participation in economic strategy provides a critical reality check, enabling an assessment of proposed strategy options. Therefore, in line with Houghton and Stevens (2011), we argue that place branding and marketing is an iterative process that requires the participation of multiple stakeholders. This raises the importance of managing and engaging these stakeholders; methods and tools are presented in the following.

6.5 Methods and tools to stimulate stakeholder engagement

In the literature, stakeholder analysis often comes first when discussing the roles of stakeholders in policymaking. This kind of analysis helps decision-makers investigate the perceptions of the various stakeholders regarding the causes and potential consequences of a problem. It also provides a guide to understanding how resources are distributed among the actors, what the accessible avenues are for influencing policymaking, and how to find paths to reach collective agreements. It usually starts with the identification phase, during which governments classify stakeholders meaningfully to determine what time and resources should be allocated to them based on their particular interest and stake in a given policy.

In practice, managers sometimes refrain from conducting such an analysis due to a lack of resources, a fear of losing power or control, or concerns about potential revelations during the process (disclosure may expose issues of power or conflict within an organisation). Concerns around potential destabilisation can also arise, since conducting a stakeholder analysis may change the usual way problems are defined and addressed by an organisation. Despite these challenges, Beach et al. (2009) argue that understanding the expectations of stakeholders is crucial to improving the quality of policy development, through the sharing of diverse ideas and perspectives. In concrete terms, stakeholder analysis aims at identifying the potential actors involved in a policy, as well as taking stock on *who does what and why*, addressing questions such as: what is the background of the stakeholders and their reason for participation? What is their source of influence and power? How can they potentially use this influence and power? Who can influence them and how can they be influenced? Who may cooperate and who may be in conflict with whom? Therefore, this kind of analysis is often considered a first necessary step in stakeholder management.

Stakeholder management refers to the activity of assessing the range of possibilities available to an organisation and how it can work with the stakeholders identified and manage their expectations (Lim et al., 2005). The strategy relies on a partnering mentality that involves communication, negotiation, contracting, and motivation. It goes beyond the analytical or descriptive phase because prioritising stakeholders is not only a complex task of assessing the strength of their stake or interests: it is also a matter of strategic choices for an organisation or project. There are two basic approaches to stakeholder management: *buffering*, in which external actors should be contained, and *bridging*, which recognises common goals, lowers the barriers around the organisation in a proactive way, and

tends to create interdependence between stakeholders. In both cases, the objective is to limit uncertainty and risks that may arise from hostility and nonacceptance of certain projects by certain stakeholders.

Stakeholder management consists of two main stages. The *assessment* phase relates to understanding the stakeholders (identification and prioritisation), while the *engagement* phase involves the subsequent interactions (communication and co-creation of activities or projects). A broad range of tools is used to guide stakeholder management:

- A *mind map* serves to establish the full list of stakeholders and to uncover how they are connected to a certain organisation or project.
- A *power grid* helps balance the relative power and influence of the actors involved in a certain project, like place-brand development.
- In addition, alternative analysis grids help evaluate several dimensions: attractiveness of a proposal v. stakeholder capability and impact on participation v. motivation to change.
- A *policy implementation grid* establishes a list of supportive v. opposing stakeholders regarding their specific interests, their resources, the implications for the policy, and so on.
- An *onion diagram* helps evaluate the (hierarchical) distance between an organisation or a project and the stakeholders, and the existing interdependencies.

Diagrams can, for instance, compare actors based on their role in the place-branding and -marketing process, their skills, and their geographical locations. Such diagrams typically focus on the initiators, the enhancers, and the followers of the marketing/branding process, and their role as regulatory, organisational, or community actors (Figure 6.2). They can also, in certain cases, include a distinction between local, regional, and national stakeholders.

All these tools are useful for managing stakeholders and laying the foundations for planning stakeholder engagement. Such engagement depends in large part on communication, which ranges from simple information sharing to active consultations. Monitoring of engagement is equally important: it can lead to adjustments and help organisations make sure that they keep stakeholders engaged in the long run. It includes the measurement of the stakeholders' satisfaction with a project or policy. It became obvious during the COVID-19 pandemic that organisations, especially public ones, needed to assess how stakeholders responded to plans and how they could be moved in the desired direction. As expected, there were of course actors that resisted the proposed measures. For this reason, it is particularly important to test the level of allegiance of stakeholders and to engage them accordingly. Van der Wal (2020) proposes five categories:

- The *advocates*, whose active engagement should be encouraged through outputs visible in policies;
- The *followers*, whose understanding of the benefits should be emphasised and whose support should not be taken for granted;

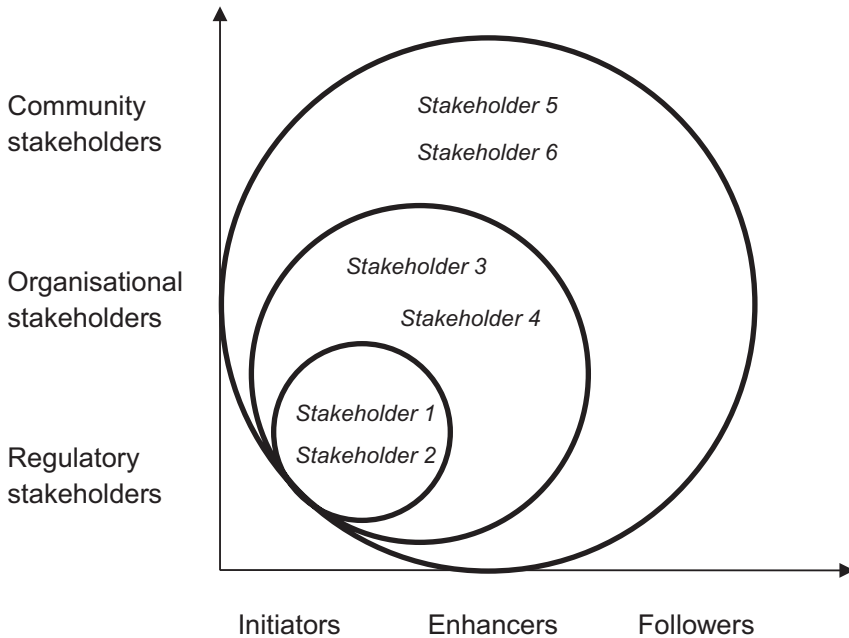


Figure 6.2 Diagram positioning the stakeholders according to their roles

- The *indifferent* should be kept informed and updated; public organisations should identify and address knowledge gaps;
- The *blockers* should be convinced of the mutual interests arising from projects and should be reached out to by public organisations to overcome potential fears;
- The *adversaries* should be addressed through counter arguments and frames to circumvent tensions.

Van der Wal (2020, p. 760) shares a quote from the CEO of the Singapore Tourism board, who said:

The SARS crisis has taught us the importance of frequent and transparent communications with both our industry partners and visitors from the onset of the crisis. Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, we have regularly shared the latest health and travel advisories, kept up our engagement with them to explain our policy decisions and reassured them that Singapore remains committed to our long-term partnership.

This quote shows the importance of engaging stakeholders and understanding how an organisation may affect their actions. According to Franklin (2020), five aspects

should always be considered in stakeholder engagement: (1) *representativeness*, that is, how individuals are representative of a wider group; (2) *transparency*, that is, how transparent an organisation is about its decisions and actions; (3) *accessibility*, that is, how accessible an organisation is when it communicates its preferences; (4) *responsiveness*, that is, how processes are designed to facilitate interaction; and (5) *accountability*, that is, how accountable an organisation is about its actions and how stakeholders' expectations are regarded.

Focusing on the communication aspect of stakeholder engagement, Yang et al. (2011) propose a typology of methods and tools. This typology is partially reproduced in Table 6.2, which includes the channels and approaches to communication, the strengths and considerations related to each of them, and the corresponding level of engagement.

As a summary of the previous paragraphs, the stakeholder engagement process can be represented as a series of actions that start with identification and end with the monitoring of the engagement plan. The process can be divided into tasks and tangible outputs, as illustrated in Table 6.3.

Regarding place branding and marketing specifically, Houghton and Stevens (2011) write that stakeholders that are identified as targets in a place should be engaged in the early stages of the branding process. Taking the example of a small English town that was regenerated in the 2010s, they explain that the regeneration

Table 6.2 A typology of approaches for stakeholder engagement

<i>Approach/ channel</i>	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Consideration</i>	<i>Engagement level</i>
<i>Exhibitions</i>	Focus stakeholder attention on the project and interest from the media	Stakeholders must be motivated to attend	Information and consultation
<i>Emails, mail, phone</i>	Easy and convenient to communicate, can solve problems efficiently	Can be costly to document all interactions	Information, consultation, involvement, collaboration
<i>Focus groups</i>	Opportunity to gather comments and identify the reasons behind stakeholders' likes and dislikes	Requires careful selection and hiring of skilled facilitators Groups may not represent the majority of all opinions	Consultation
<i>Forums</i>	Encourage discussion between stakeholders and provide opportunities for exchanging ideas	Some stakeholders may not have time to join and these forums may cause disputes between stakeholders	Consultation, involvement, collaboration
<i>Interviews</i>	Live discussion and understanding of the issues at stake	Can be time consuming and costly Requires skilled interviewers	Consultation

Source: Based on Yang et al. (2011)

Table 6.3 The stakeholder engagement process

	<i>Identify stakeholders</i>	<i>Stakeholder assessment</i>	<i>Plan communication</i>	<i>Engage stakeholders</i>
Tasks	Identify groups and representatives Create initial stakeholder list	Assess and prioritise stakeholders Develop a stakeholder map	Identify communication activities Develop detailed plans	Execute communication plan Maintain plan and monitor progress
Outputs	Stakeholder list	Engagement grid Updated stakeholder list	Communication planning sheet Stakeholder communications plan	Updated plan Feedback mechanisms

program funded each housing redevelopment, hotel renovation, and new amenity through an organic approach. This means turning the town into a seaside resort via a process driven by the local council, the regional government, and all the target groups that would participate in and benefit from the regeneration plan: “at each stage, [stakeholders] have been able to root their thinking around promotion and perception in a rich and detailed profile of the challenges and opportunities facing the town” (p. 49). Another example concerns the rebranding of Manchester in the UK, based on cross-sector partnership working. Collaboration with the music and arts industry, in addition to the sports (especially football) scene, contributed to the development of Manchester as a “cultural hub” at the beginning of the 21st century.

As mentioned, collaboration of this kind relies essentially on communication tools, especially digital ones. In this regard, the city of Medellín in Colombia provides opportunities for citizens to propose solutions to urban problems. In the capital city of Iceland, the Better Reykjavik initiative has been used by over 60% of residents. Each month, the five top-rated ideas are evaluated by a committee. As a result, the city council has invested € 1.9 million to implement multiple projects based on residents’ suggestions. We can therefore see that “traditional” tools used for citizen participation (surveys, open meetings, etc.) can also be mobilised to promote places from an internal perspective. We add that the different levels of engagement described by Yang et al. (2011) apply to place branding and marketing:

- *Information.* Building awareness through communication tools is always a first, central step;
- *Consultation.* Collecting feedback about public marketers’ actions and decisions through focus groups and/or surveys is also essential to assess the position of stakeholders;
- *Involvement.* Ensuring commitment is key when it comes to involving stakeholders in the place-brand process, such as through workshops and town hall meetings;

- *Collaboration.* Working together necessitates ground rules and well-established aims; stakeholders can collaborate in participatory decision-making structures (e.g., forums);
- *Empowerment.* Attributing a leadership role to stakeholders requires clear governance structures and roles and the provision of the necessary tools, resources, and training.

Depending on the stakeholders, it will be necessary to determine the possible and expected level of engagement. It is rarely mentioned that commitment is not always present due to lack of time, willingness, or structure. Since it is difficult to mobilise these elements, a lack of support and potentially eventual opposition is to be expected from several stakeholders. This means that the organisation of activities to engage stakeholders remains essential.

In this regard, the added value of organising workshops for place branding is underlined by Stubbs and Warnaby (2015): these forums enable attendees to collaborate and provide feedback on their respective interests, share their vision for the place, and state how they wish to influence future plans. Stubbs and Warnaby (2015, p. 113) point out that this is essential: “positioning goes to the very heart of any brand building initiative. Defining what you are, what you stand for and represent, and then having the supporting evidence to back it up can be the key. Developing tag lines or mere slogans is not”. As there is often a turnover in the staff in charge of place-brand development, keeping track of what has been done and regularly bringing stakeholders back to the table prove essential to the sustainability and success of such a process. Political dynamics and instability should also be considered (de San Eugenio-Vela et al., 2020).

Cudny (2019) also highlights the added value of holding public consultations, since they enable place marketers to gather opinions and suggestions while giving citizens opportunities to voice their concerns publicly. The range of possibilities is quite broad, as consultations can take the form of surveys, meetings and workshops, citizens’ summits (panel of citizens with a moderator), foresight activities with residents, and other events such as a “world café”. In this kind of event, people gather in a relaxed atmosphere and exchange their ideas, ideally with multiple participants. Discussions are summed up at the end of the event and then shared in a plenary session. A good example of consultation processes took place in New Zealand in the early 2000s, when Tourism New Zealand decided to enhance the relationships between the diverse stakeholders involved in promoting the country (Morgan et al., 2003). This decision led to the refinement of the communication plan. Roadshows and presentations with the industry sector were developed in the communications plan, and internal communication was also improved thanks to better websites and more accessible intranet platforms.

We wish to conclude this chapter with a great example of community engagement in urban planning. While certain cases call for the almost “compulsory” engagement of stakeholders—for instance, in the case of a public vote in which people can block the development of an area or a related event (such as the city

of Sion's bid for the 2026 Olympic Games)³—most processes result from proactive initiatives launched by the elected representatives and/or the managers of a project. In this regard, the Royal Docks in London provide a great illustration and a very detailed account of how stakeholders were involved in the intervention to enhance the area.⁴ As well explained in the document that describes the engagement of community stakeholders, the process started with a “phase 0” during which the strategy was presented to citizens, focusing on public education and information. Then, in “phase 1”, the engagement process served to develop the *Design Guide Masterplans*, based on an analysis of the challenges and opportunities. This information was then integrated into the masterplans. Workshops brought together developers, landowners, and companies operating within key sites across the Docks. In “phase 2”, the engagement process revolved around specific areas across the region. Participants discussed the sorts of wayfinding, landscape, and lighting elements that would be the most appropriate, considering their implementation and management. Engagement took place through community-led focus-group sessions and surveys, as well as artist-facilitated creative activities to shape, adapt, and add detail to the proposed palettes for each *Design Guide Masterplan*.

Notes

- 1 For a mapping of stakeholders in the field of sustainable finance in Geneva, see Sustainable Finance Geneva (2022), “Geneva’s Sustainable Finance Mapping” https://sfgeneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/mappin_geneva_15mai2020.pdf.
- 2 Ban Ki-moon (2013). Remarks at the “Sustainable City Days”, New York, NY, 12 December 2013.
- 3 The Olympic hosting bid in the city of Sion (Valais, Switzerland) was sunk by a public vote in 2018, as 54% of the voters refused to pledge financial support for the 2026 Winter Games.
- 4 The appendix describing the involvement and engagement of community stakeholders is presented in the document available here: <https://royaldocks.london/media/201210-Guide-Engagement-Appendices.pdf>.

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7 Prioritisation in attractiveness policies



7.1 Introduction

Prioritisation plays a major role in place-branding and -marketing processes, especially when designing strategies to position and promote a place. Although the issue of prioritisation is central, and often appears in policy documents related to place attractiveness, it remains mostly confined to the identification of target groups in the literature on place branding and marketing. However, prioritisation can be addressed in three ways.

The *first level* to consider is prioritisation at the policy level. A place-based policy, which implies decisions in terms of branding and marketing, competes with other public policies such as mobility, health, the management of complex social situations, the protection of certain buildings and the landscape, and so on. In this context, putting place-related issues on the political agenda is essential. This typically relates to agenda-setting in policy analysis. The *second level* corresponds to activities carried out as part of the territorial policies. Do policymakers want to attract new businesses, support existing ones to grow further, attract talents so that businesses have the necessary workforce to expand, attract new residents by offering special tax benefits, or increase the tourist offering so that visitors stay longer in the region? Very often, policy makers want to achieve all their objectives at the same time but, given the limited time and resources available to them, this is extremely difficult. Finally, the *third level* of prioritisation concerns the specific targets that a place wants to attract. If the aim is to attract new residents by offering them attractive tax conditions, it is necessary to identify in which countries these people are located and to develop corresponding communication activities. Also, the effect in terms of tax revenue due to prioritisation of these targets should be apprehended in the perspective of the whole tax policy, which needs to be balanced.

This chapter will cover all these aspects, both from a public-policy perspective and a place-branding/marketing standpoint, and will touch upon the central concepts of autonomy and strategy in public-sector organisations. Various examples of priority setting in place branding, and of organisational structures that support place promotion, will be provided throughout the chapter.

7.2 Defining priorities in the public sector

Providing a definition of prioritisation seems quite straightforward: the setting of priorities. However, as a process, prioritisation can be a challenging exercise. Often, it turns out to be more complex than initially thought, depending on the perspective preferred. Seen through a moral and ethical lens, the main concern of our societies should be to manage existing and emerging threats to our lives, giving priority to the provision of basic services to those who need them the most. However, from a utilitarian perspective, what matters most is cost-effectiveness, and policy choices should be guided by the generation of maximum net social benefits. In contrast, the egalitarian point of view would contend that equity and fairness should always be prioritised, while a resilience standpoint will give priority to options that ensure economic, social, and environmental benefits in the long run (Rasul, 2020).

In the public sector, prioritisation often relates to goal and priority setting, treated as political acts. Mostly studied in the comparative political science literature, it involves a value-based assessment of the relative importance of one challenge, objective, or public issue compared to another. Therefore, in a legislative plan, the definition of these objectives is a process of prioritisation itself, as certain objectives have been selected, while thousands of others have been ignored, thereby reflecting a particular political agenda. Jones and Baumgartner (2005) explain that choosing what problems to address first relates to the detection and prioritisation processes. In general, giving particular attention to a certain issue is, for individuals, quite simple: people tend to know when they need to search for a new car or TV. However, as Jones and Baumgartner (2005) put it, “why would one expect a government to know what problems to address and in what order to address them, and only debate solutions?” (p. 13).

The main problem here is that citizens’ desires—if we start with the assumption that such desires may guide the setting of priorities—are potentially infinite and sometimes uninformed and/or contradictory and may evolve (sometimes significantly) over time. What happens in practice is, often, a mix between analyses of electoral behaviours (general expectations), assessments of the current situation (e.g., a completely unexpected health crisis), and the raising of emotions (e.g., a serious accident that calls into question the safety of infrastructure). According to Jones and Baumgartner (2005), emotion is central, since it “governs the allocation of attention” (p. 16) and, therefore, leads to a certain order of priorities. In addition, attention and capacity for problem-solving are highly limited, as highlighted by Simon in his famous book on decision-making process in administrations (1947). This statement holds particularly when it comes to prioritising among competing issues, which cannot all fit on the agenda set by political authorities.

The notion of time (the “when” question) is key regarding prioritisation, since certain projects may attract more support at certain moments. In this regard, political momentum and external events play a central role. For instance, an opportunity to accelerate a specific project (brought about by an event, additional investment, or sometimes a crisis) may encourage politicians to shift priorities, or at least speed up certain activities to achieve a higher objective than initially designed. The example

of major sporting events such as the Olympic Games shows that transportation infrastructure is developed in ways that would otherwise certainly take a longer time. Priorities can also change if certain issues become pressing for ministers or the government as whole, due to the circumstances (for example, when a place is affected by a natural disaster or by an international conflict). However, according to the literature, it is not obvious that responding to the public's signals of priority is always in the authorities' best interests.

Against this background, prioritisation results from a global process that aims at answering the following questions: what issues do governments want to address in priority? What do they want to achieve? How are priorities and objectives set? How will organisations proceed, and what kind of resources are available for the priorities formulated? And how are these priorities and objectives aligned with the organisation's global strategy? The issue of prioritisation in public organisations' decision-making processes here touches on three different elements: first, the agenda-setting dynamics; second, the setting of priorities from a strategic-management point of view; and third, the action prioritised by the heads of administrations and government agencies. In policy studies, this third aspect is often overlooked, as attention is mostly focused on agenda-setting and the political logic of the prioritisation process. While this makes sense when it comes to prioritising one domain (e.g., health, security, education, etc.) over another, action plans must often be refined by organisations, depending on the managerial autonomy they enjoy. For instance, it seems natural for most public organisations to focus on environmental issues; however, within this policy, there is space to work out which precise set of issues should be prioritised. In certain cases, this process depends, to a greater or lesser extent, on the involvement and relative position of an organisation's stakeholders. These elements are more often highlighted in studies that focus on strategic management in the public sector.

While contributions that focus on place branding and marketing frequently highlight the importance of prioritisation, we could not find any clear definition of the prioritisation process in the literature. As mentioned in this chapter's introduction, the notion of target groups captures the attention of most researchers. However, a brief look at branding processes across the world shows a wide variety of practices, including different levels of budgets and resources allocated to place-branding and -marketing activities. This variety of practices points to diverse approaches, place-branding and -marketing efforts being in certain cases a high priority for cities, regions, or nations, whereas they appear much less important in other areas. In this regard, the attributes of places and the available budget should be taken into account when analysing the practices of places. Another aspect of prioritisation refers to the choice of the most relevant space for attractiveness and promotion purposes, as already emphasised in Part I. In addition, in line with Chapter 4, this quest for the most relevant space for promotion results from a critical decision made by the stakeholders concerned, especially the authorities (at the local or regional level) involved in this process. Finally, the setting of priorities in any place-branding strategy, and the selection of relevant target groups, belongs to this reflection on prioritisation.

7.3 Prioritisation in public policies

As mentioned, prioritisation in public policies is mostly addressed through the decision on issues to be dealt with first, then leaving aside other potential public problems. However, in this chapter, we will also focus on the priority-setting phase that occurs in any well-designed strategy. These strategies are usually designed by ministries and their departments. However, the autonomy conferred on economic-development agencies allows, in certain cases, for the setting of so-called priority actions. All these points will be presented in the following, starting with the central role played by the agenda-setting phase in public policies.

Prioritisation in agenda-setting

First, the prioritisation process is usually identified in policy studies in the “agenda-setting” phase of the policy cycle, underlining its highly political character. In this regard, it has been highlighted multiple times that resource scarcity is a driver of public actions and decisions, as all potential issues cannot be addressed at the same time. Joyce (2015, p. 301) writes that “governments and public-sector organisations have a limited amount of money, skills, staffing, management attention, and so on. All these things are in limited supply so they need to be used selectively so as to do as much good as possible”. Jones and Baumgartner (2005) add that, in addition to the scarcity of resources, the scarcity of attention leads to a decision to attend to one specific issue rather than another. Importantly, the authors tie the allocation of attention and the setting of priorities to perceived urgency and to context. In this regard, they argue that

little or no attention [is paid] to a great number of issues that are below some threshold in order that we may devote our limited available attention to those issues that seem to be most urgent. These thresholds of urgency are not invariant; rather they are context-sensitive.

(p. 332)

Joyce (2015) emphasises the weight of political considerations regarding issue prioritisation in the public sector. Using the example of the United States, he explains how the planning cycle is often subordinated to the political cycle: in that country the update or revision of priority goals occurs every four years. These priorities are made available “with the submission of the federal-government budget in the fiscal year after the year in which the President’s term begins” (p. 28). A guest author in Joyce’s book, Janet Grauberg, highlights the political nature of prioritisation, writing that in democracies

the policy agenda for each parliament is shaped by the election process. Policy advisers, most of whom have no experience of making or implementing policies and who will be under pressure from political activists and the media to be radical and bold, produce party manifestos. The party election

machines then select which of those priorities will be highlighted during the election campaign.

She adds that

the civil servants responsible for implementing the detail of each policy after the general election will have had only limited contact with those who designed it, and limited opportunity to debate with them the options they discarded, and understand how they see the challenges. So, unlike in a private or voluntary-sector organisation, those responsible for delivering the strategy have not been involved in drawing it up.

(pp. 206–207)

The process of setting priorities can be extremely broad, for example, in the case of the redesign of macroeconomic policies in Europe, focusing on growth, stability, and cohesion policies. It can also be much more precise, for example, when it comes to increasing safety on roads (reducing the number of road fatalities). In this regard, it should be noted that such priorities do not come only from a specific regional authority or national government; priorities are also set at higher institutional levels (regarding road safety, by the United Nations General Assembly and the World Health Organisation). Consultancy firms have also provided frameworks and proposals to develop, enact, and evaluate this priority through concrete measures.¹

Joyce (2015) adds that priorities arise from two dynamics. First, they can be decided during political campaigns in a general election. In this case, candidates express their willingness to focus on certain policy areas and pledge that they will focus on these areas and make a difference once they are in government. Second, in coalition governments, priorities can be set through negotiations and compromises between the different parties involved in the process. In any case, setting political priorities will have an impact on the resources available for the various public policies and consequently for the development of places.

Hence, the prioritisation process develops through the negotiation and adoption of a political programme, in the agenda-setting phase of the policy cycle. As mentioned in Part I of this book, this phase includes the emergence of a public issue; reactions raised by the media, private actors, and institutions and the setting of priority issues on the agenda. In the so-called “generic policy cycle”, Cairney (2020) defines agenda-setting as the process of identifying the public issues that will be addressed. This first phase is followed by “policy formulation”, in which objectives are set, costs are identified, and policy instruments are selected. Policy instruments can range from establishing a routinised consensus (e.g., through regular consultations) to imposing decisions very strictly (unilateral statements by the executive) on the agenda. Bali and Halpin (2021) propose a typology of policy strategies, objectives, and tools, as presented in Table 7.1.

Cairney (2020) writes that “agenda-setting involves a fundamentally important competition to exercise power to define issues as policy problems and establish

Table 7.1 A typology of agenda-setting instruments

<i>Policy strategies</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Examples of tools</i>
<i>Routinised consensus</i>	Manage the demands to be included in the agenda	Working groups, policy consultations, parliamentary inquiries, taskforces, and so on
<i>Regularised consensus</i>	Allow for the resetting of issues on the agenda	Transparency clauses in legislations, statutory reviews, and so on
<i>Generated consensus</i>	Foster policy demands to proactively shape the agenda	Outsourcing research to think tanks, interest groups, consultants, and so on
<i>Imposition</i>	Unilaterally set priorities (from the executive) on the agenda	Policy statements by the executive, exclusive summits, and so on

Source: Based on Bali and Halpin (2021)

their severity and cause”. This process does not always relate to the available information and analytical tools; although it “can involve evidence, [politics] is about exercising power to establish how we understand the world, which goes well beyond the routine search for information” (p. 28). However, tools that aim at improving policy effectiveness and proposing the best solutions are increasingly used. Indeed, while emotions, party politics, and electoral preferences still play a major role, certain departments sometimes decide to allocate resources or to focus on a certain issue based on an analytical point of view. For instance, a department of public instruction willing to cover part of school costs may ask experts to analyse what kind of investment will be the most efficient for the families concerned (public transport, canteen, swimming pools, etc.), thus relying on either a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) or diverse scenarios proposed by the analysts to set their strategic priorities.

The pre-eminence of political considerations in agenda-setting should not completely obscure the fact that prioritisation is also a participatory process in many cases. In addition to the involvement of many state and non-state actors (e.g., interest groups) in consensus-building processes, citizens may also be involved in determining public priorities, and not only in an instrumental way (the citizen as a voter). An example of inter-stakeholder collaboration concerns the metropolitan area of Angers, France, where a participatory governance process was launched to redefine how public policies should be designed (see Carassus, 2022). The process brought together various actors (elected representatives, municipal agents, employees) and was aimed at answering the following questions: what should the community develop? What should it stop? What should it do differently? What should it continue to do? Several tools were used, such as strategic segmentation and a decision-support information system. An action plan for each area of intervention was then formulated. This approach has made it possible for the metropolitan area to review its local policies and to determine priorities. Finally, in countries that

have a tradition of direct democracy, public problems can be raised by individuals and groups and submitted to a vote when the required number of signatures has been reached. Politicians are then forced to discuss the issue at stake and then implement a new law or modify an existing one if a majority of the population has expressed their preference regarding the proposal they had to vote on.

Prioritisation in government strategies

The prioritisation process is often presented as a core component and a driver of strategies developed in the public sector. As a complex process, priority setting is key to the design of strategies as it aims at improving policy goals based on decisions made on the allocation of the available resources to specific objectives and related activities. According to Joyce (2015), the definition and clarification of an organisation’s main priorities and the choice of the best available options are among the most important strategic decisions to be made, together with the analysis of the initial situation, the analysis of resources and their planned use, and long-term planning.

Therefore, the setting of priority goals responds to the question “where does the organisation want to go?”, while the overall strategy, including the organisation’s activities and projects, responds to the question “how can the organisation get there?” Guided by an overall strategy, this prioritisation process can take various approaches, from a setting of priorities by, for example, subjects or geographic areas. It can sometimes combine these approaches, as presented in the “cascading strategy” of the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs.² The legal basis for all action plans, the distinction between the strategic and operational levels, and the organisation by departments is, however, common to many policy strategies in the public sector (see Table 7.2).

Table 7.2 A cascading strategy for Swiss foreign policy (2020–2023)

		Foreign Policy Strategy document (2020–2023)	
		Geographic	Thematic
Level 1	Strategic (national government—federal council)	Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Strategy 2021–24	Arms Control and Disarmament Strategy 2022–25
Level 2		Sub-Saharan Strategy 2021–24	Digital Foreign Policy Strategy 2021–24
		China Strategy 2021–24	International Cooperation Strategy 2021–24
		Americas Strategy 2022–25	Strategy for Communication Abroad 2021–24
Level 3	Operational (departments)	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Action plan 2022–25	
		Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Private Sector 2021–24	
		Guidelines on Water 2022–25	
		Human Rights Guidelines 2021–24	

Priority goals and objectives are established for each strategy. For instance, regarding the international cooperation strategy, Switzerland’s actions will focus on jobs (alleviate need and poverty in the world), climate (preserve the environment), migration, and rule of law (foster respect for human rights and promote democracy). Four objectives have been formulated: economic development, environment protection, human development, and peace and (good) governance. The same logic applies to the other thematic strategies. Regarding the geographic strategies, the goals relate directly to the targeted areas. For instance, in the Americas, Switzerland has formulated five key priority areas: the United States (the country’s main trade partner outside the EU), Canada, the “jaguar economies” of Latin America that hold considerable economic potential, the priority countries for development cooperation, and the organisations in which Switzerland has a status of observer or is a member.

More generally, strategic planning in the public sector involves the development of a holistic view of organisations, one that mixes long-term thinking, goal analysis, and a subjective evaluation of these goals and values set by governments. Prioritisation is central in strategic planning as it relates directly to policy choices, the setting of specific objectives, and the focus on certain key initiatives. Moreover, strategic thinking often starts with the identification of opportunities and challenges for the organisation, as highlighted by Höglund and Svärdesten (2015) regarding the Swedish Transport Administration (STA). The authors explain that STA’s work was influenced by the identification of strategic challenges that were expected to help the organisation navigate in the prioritisation process. The six challenges were: building an energy-efficient transport system; ensuring well-functioning travel and transport in big cities; ensuring efficient transport chains for the industry; providing a robust, reliable infrastructure; generating more value for money; and creating a modern transport agency.

In the academic literature, and in reports from governments and international institutions, multiple flow diagrams, charts, and frameworks have been designed to present the strategic planning process; to conclude this section, we provide a framework (Figure 7.1) that highlights the main steps related to prioritisation (in grey) in strategic planning.

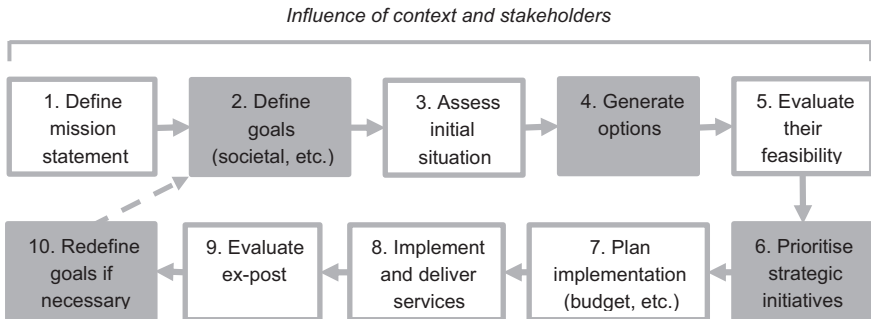


Figure 7.1 The importance of prioritisation in strategic planning

Setting priority actions

As mentioned in the introduction, the prioritisation process can also be addressed from a different angle. Rather than focusing on agenda-setting, we will now discuss how priorities are decided upon from a managerial and operational standpoint. Here, priorities should be understood as *priority actions* set within and by public organisations. Although simple in theory, prioritisation and alignment of action plans with the overall strategy—which are central to rational and coherent decision-making—are a complex task to perform in the public sector because of its political nature and the high number of stakeholders involved. The complexity is compounded by the application of strategic planning in the private sector (with a strong focus on revenue and profit growth) to the public sector, where the objectives are diverse and difficult to rank in an objective order of importance.

Another aspect of this complexity stems from potential contradictions between principles enacted by the same authority. To take the example of families that claimed asylum and were forced to go back home: deportation has sometimes clashed, in certain countries, with opinions shared by the majority of the population about children's rights (education, care) and the fact that the children of these families cannot be held responsible for their own situation. However, separating families is not an option, keeping families in secure detention hampers children's rights to play freely and have access to school, and the available resources to make sure that these services are provided to children are not infinite. Finally, complexity is inherent in public organisations' operations because of "silo working" habits. Various ministries' constant tendency to promote and defend their own interests is not always conducive to finding the best solutions and outcomes for government actions as a whole. In this regard, loyalty issues may influence the actions to be prioritised within different ministries and departments.

Depending on the organisation type and their respective level of autonomy, public bodies enjoy different margins of manoeuvre in setting priority actions. While the overarching priorities, decided at the political level, cannot be shifted, managers in autonomous agencies can still define their organisational objectives, the target groups, and the prioritisation of the tasks to be performed. In certain instances, this can be done without consulting the ministry (van Thiel et al., 2012). In Germany, Bach (2010) sent out a survey about managers' perceived autonomy in public-law bodies operating under ministerial oversight. Among the respondents, almost 70% of them said they "decide alone or with only minor involvement of the ministry on how they carry out their core tasks and set priorities" (p. 98). Here, we refer to policy autonomy, which relates to the discretionary authority of certain agencies to decide on policy implementation, mostly at the operational level (prioritisation of the tasks to be performed). We present the differences between prioritisation understood as agenda-setting and as setting priority goals within public-sector organisations in Table 7.3.

The process of prioritisation within government agencies has been studied by several scholars. The agencies include environmental protection, immigration and customs enforcement, consumer-product safety commissions, and so on. For

Table 7.3 The prioritisation process in the public sector: agenda-setting vs. priority actions

	<i>Prioritisation process understood as</i>	
	<i>Setting priorities in the agenda</i>	<i>Setting priority actions</i>
<i>Main dynamics</i>	Party politics, elections	Organisational politics
<i>Organisation</i>	Ministries, departments	Agencies
<i>Level of action</i>	Strategic	Operational
<i>Constraints</i>	Budgetary, electoral	Mostly budgetary

instance, Schinkel et al. (2020) analysed the dynamics of prioritisation and how the agencies' leadership may prefer one specific action over alternative ones, as these agencies have "considerable freedom, formal, and informal, to choose among different possible courses of action" (p. 240). They show that two factors have a strong influence over this prioritisation process. First, budget constraints, which impact the choice of priority actions and their concrete realisation; and second, the type of leader, as heads with low profiles will more easily shift from too ambitious actions to more feasible ones, especially compared to leaders that seek (personal) exposure. In this regard, actions can also be prioritised depending on the head's willingness to further their careers.

Other studies have explored the usage of tools designed to help prioritise decision makers' interventions, responding to the following questions: what should be implemented first? How can the objectives be achieved? And what are the expected returns? The legitimacy of decisions often rests on value-judgment criteria, attributing high importance to these analyses. The development and usage of these tools also aim to respond to the difficulties faced by public organisations when trying to plan and prioritise in times of high uncertainty (such as now, in this first part of the 21st century, as we experience recurring environmental, health, and security crises). Technological progress also influences the prioritisation of public issues.

In addition to prioritisation *per se*, digital tools also help take decisions. According to Valle-Cruz et al. (2020), artificial intelligence can already (and will even more in the future)

highlight important problems, unfold hidden needs or problematic issues, and identify key elements that could affect on-going public policies. . . . Some cases are leading in this direction. In San Mateo County, California, which lies on the San Andreas fault, an algorithm, containing public data such as age, type, and construction materials of individual buildings, allows seismic data and structural knowledge of buildings to be used to judge which parts of a city will be most at risk and prioritise rescue efforts.

(pp. 6–7)

Bach (2018) argues that organisational autonomy has a strong influence over the prioritisation of actions as set by managers within public organisations. In practice, this can work in various ways: in certain countries, the head of an agency sets the

priorities, while in others, staff participate more actively in the process. Moreover, priority setting can be informally agreed and defined on a yearly basis, or established by law. More generally, depending on their autonomy, agencies can range from almost self-governing bodies (in terms of priority actions and setting targets), while others have less margin and still depend largely on orientations decided by the ministries. When the level of autonomy is high, agency managers/programme officers can have considerable discretion over the realisation of strategic priority actions.

The process of *agencification* (i.e., the proliferation of agencies set up to complete tasks of public interest), inspired by NPM principles, aimed for increased managerial performance (Pollitt et al., 2001). Characterised by higher levels of autonomy compared to other, more central units of the public administration, agencies were created in very diverse sectors. The expected benefits include more efficient, transparent, and client-oriented services (Verhoest et al., 2010). In the late 2000s, in many European countries, agencies retained, within their regulatory environment, a certain degree of latitude to define their organisational objectives and to prioritise the main tasks to be performed. As place attractiveness typically relies on economic-development agencies, the process of prioritisation, used in both understandings of the term (agenda-setting and priority actions), is further developed in the place-branding field in the following.

7.4 Prioritisation in place branding and marketing

In the place-branding and -marketing literature, few contributions pay close attention to the prioritisation process, focusing instead on the production of place brands, audiences' interactions and reactions to these brands, and the social outcomes of branding (Sevin, 2021). However, the process of prioritisation can also be addressed through the three perspectives presented previously: agenda-setting, strategic management, and priority actions. We start with the setting of priorities regarding place branding and marketing, focusing more particularly on governance and budget issues.

Agenda-setting

The setting of priorities is crucial, as places need to decide on what sectors should be prioritised and, accordingly, what groups should be targeted and how the place should be promoted. As a result, attractiveness policies also strongly depend on agenda-setting considerations. In this regard, Box 7.1 presents the case of New Zealand, which targets specific markets for both trade and tourism based on the high-level destinations and the high-quality products provided.

Box 7.1 The case of New Zealand story

New Zealand, located in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, consists of two main islands. It is a country of great diversity as a result of its history and more recent migrations. It ranks highly in international comparison in terms

of quality of life, education, protection of civil liberties, and economic freedom. The landscapes of New Zealand are particularly well known abroad, due to the specific topography of the country, combining high mountain peaks and beaches by the Pacific Ocean. These landscapes have benefited from international coverage on several occasions, including sporting events (e.g., the Rugby World Cup) and series/movies, the most famous example being the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

The strong focus on tourism promotion, mainly based on the country's landscape, led the government to rethink the branding of the country in 2013. This led to the creation of a more diversified approach that goes beyond the country's tourism assets and resources. The process involved the engagement, by the national government, of multiple stakeholders. New Zealand Story was therefore developed by lead organisations (government agencies, including Tourism New Zealand, New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, and Education New Zealand) and other actors, whose inputs have proved essential to develop the brand's priorities and values. Stakeholders included 200 leaders from the primary sector, manufacturing, education, export industry, representatives of Māori groups, and government services. Collaborative workshops and events supported the whole process. The success of this process is still tangible today, characterised by close and fruitful relationships between the government bodies in charge of the country's economic development and private companies.

The creation of New Zealand Story aimed to expand the country's reputation and value internationally, mainly through storytelling. For a country like New Zealand, whose economy relies heavily on the strengths of its exports, continuing to grow and diversify strongly matters. The goal is therefore to tell a compelling and aspirational story about the country, grounded in core values defined by the local actors and that resonate with foreign audiences. In sum, to tell more about the advantages and opportunities of New Zealand and not only about those already well known internationally, especially landscapes.

New Zealand Story has been designed as a government agency that does not belong to any specific ministry or department. While it reports directly to the Ministers of Trade and of Economic Development, it enjoys a certain autonomy in setting priority actions and develops its own strategy. This strategy is presented to the ten members of the board, which consists both of experts (e.g., cultural strategist, arts sector experts) and members of government agencies and ministries (e.g., Tourism New Zealand). The board provides governance over the overall strategy and acts as a forum where different stakeholders, active in diverse sectors (culture, tourism, trade, etc.), ensure efficient collaborations. The other mechanisms to guarantee successful collaborations include the Brand Hub group, where the lead marketing and brand experts from the organisations involved meet on a regular basis and share insights and projects. Funded by seven government organisations,

New Zealand Story employs 18 people, active in marketing, communication, events, consulting, content creation, and IP protection.

As mentioned, the initiative that led to the creation of New Zealand Story was launched in 2013. However, a reflection about the core values of the country's brand emerged in 2020 in a project to define the values of the country. That project lasted over a year and involved over 30 organisations. The engagement of a high number of stakeholders participated to the success and co-design of the values attributed to the country:

1. Curious, ingenious, and adventurous spirit (“Pōtikitanga” in the Māori language);
2. Drive to care for people, place, and planet (“Tiaki”);
3. Welcoming others and building relationships based on respect, care, and reciprocity (“Manaaki”);
4. Acting with integrity, honesty, and transparency (“Pono”).

It was particularly important, when defining these values, to avoid linguistic appropriation (i.e., when the language becomes adopted and adapted by another culture, often using words and expressions incorrectly, so that the new meaning of the words does not match the original culture's). However, using the native language of Aotearoa (New Zealand) allows New Zealand Story to showcase another aspect of the country's unique culture.

The activities of New Zealand Story revolve, for example, around the organisation of webinars and education about the use of the brand, both in government organisations and in the private sector. More generally, there are five key tasks carried out by New Zealand Story that, for some of them, resemble practices that exist in other countries:

- The first relates to market research (understand perceptions and spot opportunities);
- The second refers to a brand toolkit (resources to promote the country through partners by using the basic campaign in their advertising, on social networks and websites, by using email templates, sales flyers, etc.);
- The third concerns content creation and media;
- The fourth concerns consulting;
- And the fifth relates to the management of the country's trademark, the FernMark.

Of course, communicating about (success) stories remains central for New Zealand Story; the stories cover diverse areas, in line with the organisation's ambitions, and they are shared with other ministries, departments, and agencies, as well as other actors, to increase their diffusion. In this regard, it is important for the organisation to highlight less-renowned sectors to show the country's strengths and potential in these sectors of activity. For instance,

even as the fourth most prolific launcher of rockets in the world, New Zealand still suffers from a lack of visibility in the technology and aeronautic sectors.

As the stories aim at changing perceptions, assessing the performance of the efforts deployed by New Zealand Story is essential. The assessment mobilises figures from BrandFinance®, as well as quantitative data (based on key indicators in the targeted markets and sectors) and qualitative data (collected through focus groups and interviews in the targeted markets). The main markets for New Zealand (for both trade and tourism) are Australia, Asian countries (South Korea, China, Japan, and Singapore), European states (Germany, the United Kingdom), and the United States and Canada. Here, the geographical factor, and most importantly the characteristics of these markets (rich countries), play a central role since quality products and destinations appeal to high-level and high-value customers.

Box written in collaboration with David Downs,
CEO of New Zealand Story, and Amy Knightley, director of
marketing and communications of New Zealand Story.
More information: www.nzstory.govt.nz/.

Although it seems quite straightforward to target markets and implement the corresponding strategy, significant differences can be observed from one place to another when it comes to allocating financial resources to place-marketing activities, although recent figures remain extremely hard to find. For instance, in Germany, data from 2004 show that cities spent very different amounts on their marketing plans and activities. Based on information released by *AG Stadtmarketing*, Jacobsen (2009) presents these differences (the figures are reproduced in Table 7.4). While budgets are not always comparable (costs and tasks included are not always the same), there are still significant differences between the cities compared.

A study conducted by Bernd Radtke revealed that in early 2010, almost all German cities with more than 25,000 inhabitants were active in city marketing. In fact, 98.3% of the 500 largest German cities stated that they operated city marketing institutionally, with at least one person in charge.³ However, it is difficult to reach solid conclusions in this matter, as there are huge differences in terms of structures and resources dedicated to place-marketing and place-branding efforts. In certain places, people have been appointed brand manager. For instance, there is a single brand manager in the city of Mississauga, Canada, with one person holding a similar position in the Vaud Promotion agency (a Swiss canton). In contrast, other places have a department dedicated to promoting the place in general (especially cities) with a tight budget and more general priorities. As a result, branding is not part of their core business, and the people in charge of place marketing become in

Table 7.4 Place-marketing budget in selected large German cities

City	Annual marketing budget	Population (2005)	Spending per inhabitant
Berlin	€ 5,000,000 ⁽¹⁾	3,395,150	€ 1.47
Dortmund	€ 200,000	588,168	€ 0.34
Hamburg	€ 4,000,000	1,743,627	€ 2.29
Hanover	€ 2,250,000	515,729	€ 4.36
Karlsruhe	€ 2,000,000 ⁽²⁾	285,263	€ 7.01
Leipzig	€ 500,000	502,651	€ 0.99
Mainz	€ 330,000	194,374	€ 1.70
Stuttgart	€ 2,500,000	592,569	€ 4.22
Average			€ 2.15

Notes: (1) Annual figures for 2008–2011; (2) budget increased as part of competition for the “European Cultural City 2010”.

Source: Jacobsen (2009)

effect managers for the global development of the place. According to the German study *Stadtmarketing im Profil*,⁴

city marketing is city development management: city marketing is concerned with the urban quality of life. It focuses on city development—conceptual, communicative and project-oriented. City marketing is therefore not “nice-to-have”, but an important, citizen-oriented urban development instrument and close partner of urban planning.

(translated from German by the authors)

The design of place-branding and -marketing strategies

Although agenda-setting plays a central role, the prioritisation process is also essential to the design of place-branding and -marketing strategies. Indeed, from a strategic perspective, it is extremely important that places, either at the local, regional, or national level, set priorities in terms of place development. Such a strategic approach is, in Mishra and Rolland’s words (2010, p. 51), “imperative . . . to address the common as well as the competing needs in a coherent and logical manner”. This indispensable step then allows for the positioning of the place and the definition of the target groups and later the execution and evaluation of the strategy. In terms of marketing, the main aspects of the strategy should address the following questions: what offering should be designed, and for what target groups? What kind of relationships does an organisation want to establish with implementation partners and target groups? And how should an organisation position the offering compared to other offerings? In this regard, the distinctiveness of a given place is not necessarily relevant in a national context; focusing on the markets in which it competes is much more important. However, most places share the objective of increasing their competitiveness. In this regard, Metaxas (2009) highlights the

importance of strategic planning. He explains that place marketing can contribute to the implementation of attractiveness policies only if it develops through a strategic planning process. One should never underestimate the political dimension of the design of a strategy. The intensity of its impact can vary, ranging from high (political influence not only on the strategy design but also on more technical and operational aspects) to low (especially when politicians have a rough idea on the design and then assess the strategy based on the results obtained).

A strategy requires the development of a clear vision for a place. In the case of Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, local initiatives and inward investments result from a clear vision: to achieve carbon neutrality by 2025. This strategic goal has involved a strong focus on liveability and green transformation. While it will not succeed, this strategic plan has helped attract global tech companies interested in this matter (Nordic Place Academy, 2016). National governments may also decide to set global priorities for the entire country. In South America, the Start-up Chile programme was launched in 2010 to position the country as a global hub, alongside places such as the Silicon Valley or Tel Aviv (Nordic Place Academy, 2016). This programme is managed by the Economic Development Agency CORFO (Corporación de Fomento de la Producción). Several actions have been taken, such as the careful selection of entrepreneurs who receive a work visa, seed capital, and equipment, to ensure that the incentives provided match with the overall strategy.

The absence of a strategy may lead to poor management or, in the case of place brands, low visibility; a proliferation of different brands, slogans, and messages; and a potential clash with local actors. In Liège, Belgium, Scatton and Schmitz (2016) explain that the branding process started in the context of the bid to organise the 2017 international exhibition. This bid, initiated by the city in 2010, was supported by the Liège Province, the Walloon Region, the Belgian government, and the main political parties (see Box 3.3). Although the city was already thinking about homogenising its communication, notably by creating a logo and a slogan (“one city, one spirit”) in 2006, no international communication plan existed, and no other public or private players were included in the process. While the bid failed, the city authorities wanted to build on the momentum and created a branding structure to increase Liège’s visibility internationally. This gave birth to the “Liège Together” brand, based on the open, connected, and creative features of the metropolitan area. Unfortunately, the strategy was rushed, did not involve extensive stakeholder consultation, and lacked a proper communication strategy. As a result, various actors refer to the metropolitan area with diverse logos and slogans and convey a message that is not consistent across all sectors.

This points to the importance of involving stakeholders, as already highlighted in Chapter 6. Cudny (2019) presents different ways of engaging places’ stakeholders, including citizens’ summits, public debates and consultations, workshops, and so on. However, Eshuis et al. (2014) note that generally, citizens’ influence on place marketing is quite low. Indeed, many cases show that individuals outside the decision-making circle do not influence prioritisation of strategic objectives; rather, authorities tend increasingly to involve them in the choice of priority actions to be taken. As will be further developed in the following, citizens are more active

in *place-making*, defined in a report from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology School of Architecture and Planning as “the practice of designing, creating, and programming public spaces around the needs and desires of the community of users”.⁵ Although residents may not be actively involved in the setting of priorities for developing a place, especially at the local level, getting a good sense of stakeholders’ desires and needs remains essential to a successful place-branding strategy. In an unpublished study,⁶ a consulting firm surveyed 5000 place brands and found that only 14% of these brands still existed after one year. Gollain⁷ compared place brands in France between 2013 and 2020 and found that 80% of them had changed or disappeared. One of the main explanatory reasons cited for these failures was the fact that “the actors who [were] not mobilised [did] not carry the brand”.

In terms of prioritisation, the mission of economic-development agencies is central in place branding and marketing, because compared to other government agencies, they play a more strategic role or fulfil more strategic missions. These agencies, such as Vaud Promotion, are larger and often work together with organisations commonly studied in the literature, for instance, destination management organisations (DMOs) like VisitDenmark or Marketing Liverpool. They are generally less sensitive to political decisions and not bound to strict laws and/or obligations, at least not to the same extent as other agencies. This margin of manoeuvre can be explained by the role of these economic-development agencies. They are asked to analyse markets and opportunities and to prioritise their activity in line with this initial market analysis—a result of the fact that place marketing requires prioritising in a business, investment, and market-oriented logic.

These agencies thus find themselves at a greater distance from political reflection, which can cause problems: for instance, the most interesting markets from a business and profit perspective can conflict with the political acceptability of certain deals because of sanctions on a targeted country and/or in a specific industry, such as the impossibility to sell certain goods to a region or country (weapons are a typical example). In the past, deals have been cancelled because of tensions between countries, as illustrated by the blocking of the sale of a ski lift to North Korea⁸ by Switzerland’s State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) in 2013. Regarding investments from China, many companies are increasingly talking about a clear political risk, clashing with a pure investment perspective. This calls for the careful selection, and thus prioritisation, of economic partners and more generally of the individuals and groups targeted by economic-development agencies in any attractiveness strategy.

The last remark points to the necessary exercise of targeting groups that are aligned with the overall place-marketing and/or place-branding strategy. Many contributions in the literature spend considerable time on this aspect compared to the other elements presented previously. As stated in other chapters of this book, we do not want to assert that targeting groups is specific only to place branding and does not relate to public policies. In contrast, Ingram and Schneider (1991) explain that policy designers are faced with various target groups when it comes, for instance, to reducing road accidents and related deaths. They can variously

decide to focus on drunk drivers, on alcohol use by the young population, on automobile manufacturers, on infrastructure, and so on. Again, the political dynamic is quite strong, as noted by Ingram and Schneider (1991): “definition and choice of target groups reflect the exercise of political power and are not simple technocratic exercises in logic”. They also write that “policy success is more likely if the policy has identified target groups who are connected in logical ways to desired ends” (p. 335). Skodvin et al. (2010) add that the political feasibility of prioritised projects tends to depend on target groups’ influence on policies and decisions, which in turn depends on these groups’ available resources and the nature of their relationship with decision-makers.

However, our argument here refers to the large number of stakeholders and the selection of target groups among them, the strategic aspect of the group-targeting exercise (including alignment with an overall strategy), the level of autonomy of economic-development agencies, and the market-oriented logic of the exercise in many instances. While the main aspects of the strategy are delivered during the agenda-setting phase, the targeted groups, the definition of the main objectives, the identification of market opportunities (in the case of business-oriented strategies), and the evaluation of these objectives remain to be set more precisely. Therefore, the identification of the target groups and their relevance to the proposed strategy is key. In addition, targeting the “right” markets and groups remain indispensable in place-branding and -marketing processes. Regarding tourism especially, Gertner and Freire (2018) argue that there is a clear “need to address different attributes to appeal to different target markets”, keeping in mind that “different target markets view the same attributes of a destination brand differently”, which calls for different communication strategies (p. 48).

Different categories or lists of stakeholders have been suggested in the literature. Zenker and Martin (2011) present three main target groups: visitors, residents, and business and industry. The two latter categories include internal and external target groups. Jørgensen (2019) adds political actors, public institutions, and export markets in his overview of target groups for place branding. Although not always considered targets, founding members or later participants in business clusters are increasingly important in place attractiveness. This calls, again, for the targeting of the most beneficial actors in the cluster’s development. In the following, we propose a typology of target individuals and groups from the perspective of a public organisation in charge of developing a place’s attractiveness (Table 7.5).

Setting priority actions in place branding

The setting of priority actions and the existence of trade-offs are common to almost all policies and sectors; however, this is particularly the case in place branding and marketing, where most actions do not depend on a very strict regulatory framework. Certain actions also require quick decisions to move forward in a competitive market. For instance, offering a tax giveaway to companies or other specific incentives in a preferred sector (to establish a cluster, e.g., in biotechnologies) require a rapid prioritisation process. The creation of a brand can also occur more quickly than

Table 7.5 Typology of target groups

Scope of actions	Priority		
	Business	Tourism	Citizens
Internal target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic entrepreneurs • Domestic companies • Domestic investors • Research centres • Artisans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic leisure tourists • Domestic business tourists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents • Students • Domestic workforce (highly qualified to low qualified)
External target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign entrepreneurs • Foreign companies • Foreign investors • Export markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure tourists • Business tourists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New/future potential residents • Students • Foreign workforce (highly qualified to low qualified)

usual, as a political green light for a new brand and the hiring of external actors (e.g., consultants) may significantly accelerate the process. Moreover, most actions are strategic in place marketing, as emphasised by Metaxas (2009, p. 1359):

as a strategic process, place marketing is designed under the angle of a total strategic management, including tactical planning actions. For instance, such actions concern the situation audit analysis of a place, the development of tourism market research, the segmentation of the potential target markets, the creation of public relations plans, [or] the creation of tourism packages for particular target markets.

When limited to a logo or a slogan, this process is largely criticised by academics (and certain practitioners as well), since places should not be treated as a product. Their complexity cannot be reduced to a particular industry, as is the case for most products, since

places are spaces where people live, in which they move around, bring up their children, enjoy their work and leisure time, become ill and hopefully get treated in a well-organised healthcare system, are engaged in social, sport and cultural activities in associations and NGOs. To think that the awareness and reputation of all this can be influenced by the use of a logo or slogan seems to be rather naïve, to put it mildly.

(Govers, 2013, p. 73)

Additional issues arise from this need to act quickly. The most blatant example is the exclusion of residents from the whole process of prioritisation and, more generally, from the creation of a place brand. Regarding the setting of priorities, many examples have shown how a lack of citizen involvement has backfired on

authorities. For instance, in cities and regions plagued by overtourism, locals' discontent about the situation has been observed. One of the most notorious examples is the capital city of Germany, Berlin, where stickers "Berlin does not love you" first appeared in 2011, revealing the tensions between the stylisation of the booming tourism branch and residents' attitudes towards tourism (Novy, 2013).

In this regard, several academics have highlighted the necessity to develop participatory approaches. For instance, Hereźniak (2017) argues that citizens can be involved and engaged in diverse ways, ranging from passive listeners of projects to a more active, influencing position, such as receiving information on potentially funded bottom-up projects and voting for them on a dedicated website. She gives the example of the Polish city of Łódź. Authorities, especially at the local level, may also seek feedback and opinions from residents, for example, in Dunedin, New Zealand, where boxes have been placed in central public spaces. Another way to engage citizens, especially in promoting a place through the endorsement of its brand, is the creation of a "network of ambassadors". For instance, OnlyLyon boasts a total number of 27,000 city ambassadors,⁹ and the Newcastle Ambassador Programme¹⁰ aims to gather the "city's most influential voices . . . to encourage inward investment, stimulate local pride, and attract and retain talent in Newcastle". These programmes are sometimes criticised, as they involve budgets to finance these ambassadors.

However, this should be nuanced, as these actions do not always relate to the prioritisation of strategic goals or actions. As mentioned, it is more about place-making (i.e., the enhancement of places with the goal of turning them into useful and meaningful spaces) than about prioritisation *per se*. In addition, while citizens may have their say on the development of a place, they do not, most often, decide whether the region should, for instance, attract a certain type of company to the area. In this sense, we want to repeat here that economic-development agencies not only set priority actions, such as preparing a massive cultural event to promote urban tourism (Cudny, 2019): they can also take part in the strategic phase of the attractiveness policy. Consequently, they help target markets and specific groups and may significantly contribute to the creation of a new place brand.

7.5 What structure to promote a place?

We wish to conclude this chapter with elements that relate to the governance structures that conduct place-marketing and place-branding efforts. At the local level, the institutional structures that support city-marketing and city-branding efforts often vary from one case to another, sometimes making it difficult to know what financial resources are invested in projects. To the extent of our knowledge, the factors that explain these various structures have gone unexplored. Certain reports tend to show that city size and resources may play a role, as in the case of Germany. Indeed, a recent study conducted by the federal association of German cities (BCSD, *Bundesvereinigung City- und Stadtmarketing Deutschland e.V.*) revealed that overall, city marketing is steered by the city administration. However, in large cities (with more than 50,000 inhabitants), the most predominant structure is the

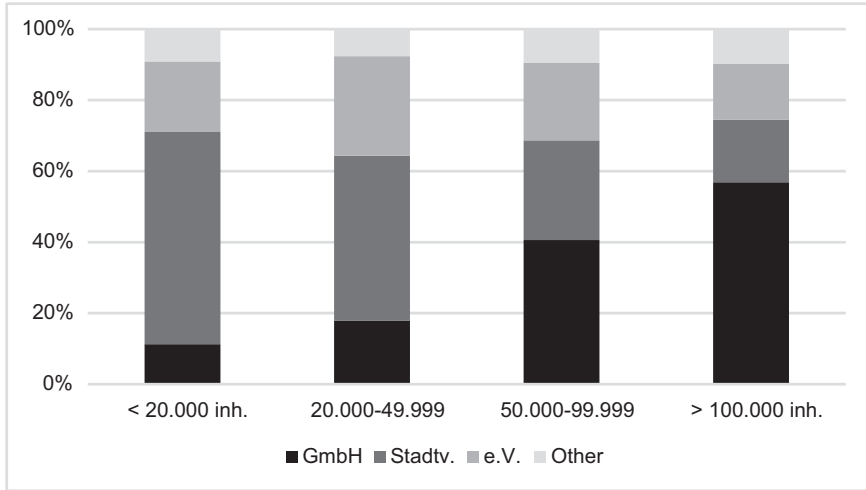


Figure 7.2 Distribution of legal structures in German cities

Source: Based on BCSD (2022)

limited liability company (GmbH), with over 40% of the cities having adopted this kind of structure, where shareholders’ private liability is limited. The two other main forms are city administration (Stadtverwaltung—Stadt.) and registered associations (e.V.). Figure 7.2 provides a detailed view of the distribution of structures in Germany ($N = 273$ cities).¹¹ It should be pointed out that the legal status of organisations differs in each country.¹²

Elsewhere, we can find several famous examples of place brands managed by not-for-profit organisations. These include the case of Lyon, France, where the OnlyLyon manager works with a team for strategic development, communication, and so on. The not-for-profit organisation that steers the process depends on the collaboration of numerous local actors, which belong, as partners, to the promotion of the city through the OnlyLyon brand. A similar approach was adopted in Aix-Marseille, France, where the initiative was launched by the metropolitan area of Aix-Marseille Provence, the Bouches-du-Rhône department, Aix-Marseille University, the port and the airport, and an association of local businesses, among others. The brand “One Provence” is now steered by the eponymous marketing agency. Another famous example is the city of Amsterdam and its “Iamsterdam” brand, created in 2003 (Kavaratzis, 2008). The choice of the logo was determined at the end of a sophisticated marketing and economic-development strategy that involved numerous stakeholders. A not-for-profit organisation was created as a public–private partnership (Gayet, 2014) to coordinate the marketing efforts of the whole metropolitan region and to manage the brand in an integrated way. We can also cite the example of Memphis, Tennessee, presented in this book (see Box 6.1).

While the success of actions led by not-for-profit organisations has often been praised, especially in the cases described just previously, certain authors have

raised concerns about a degree of democratic deficit. This points to the absence of political leadership and/or control rather than the exclusion of stakeholders. In this sense, Pinson (2002, p. 492) writes that

although a capacity for collective action seems to be re-forming within a network that brings together economic, political, and university elites, the price to be paid is complete opacity of these aggregation processes and rupture with the networks of social associationism and the non-profit sector. It is clear that the political leadership, by dint of wanting to euphemise its intervention, has not been able to play an integrating role between these two urban networks. Thus, it seems—at least in Turin—that the costs of the logistics of collective action, which are deployed in the strategic projects approach and allow the rebuilding of coalition, are a certain democratic opacity and a growing compartmentalisation of urban society.

However, in certain cases, grassroot organisations have been involved in these partnerships structures.

At the national level, experiences also vary enormously from one country to another. While certain countries have parallel structures to the state, such as language institutes to promote their culture abroad, others do not. Certain states, depending on their strengths, tend to promote themselves through regions and cities, especially for tourism. This indicates, sometimes, a strong focus on tourism as a top priority for country promotion (country as a destination, with a focus on destination marketing). However, in many cases, and especially in large countries, the lack of integration and the diffuse governance do not help identify and implement prioritisation. Alaux (2022) gives the example of France, where attractiveness agencies still form a network of many sectoral actors (including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of Tourism, Atout France, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Business France, etc.). The absence of clear prioritisation is somewhat linked with, potentially, a weak brand, as explained by Alaux (2022, p. 14): “it is hard to communicate the same positioning for different international targets, whether tourists or investors industries as diverse as the automotive sector, aeronautics, fashion or healthcare”. At the national level, several contributions have also noted the difficulty, in certain cases, of promoting a country that is deeply fragmented and where different areas’ needs vary quite strongly. Others have noted the political use of nation branding, as highlighted in Chapter 1 of this book (soft power). All in all, Freire (2022) argues that many countries still do not prioritise their targets, plan a long-term strategy, or engage stakeholders in a strategic and targeted way. He writes that nation branding remains used as a political tool and deployed through advertisement campaigns that have a narrow scope, limited duration, and little effectiveness.

More generally, we can distinguish prioritisation processes that are typically top-down-driven from more participatory approaches. While large-scale projects and priority setting at the national level often rely on big players such as the national government, the ministry of trade, and the main economic actors (especially large

companies), small-scale projects and aspects regarding the place image have sometimes built on a more participatory approach. This was the case, for instance, in the Hague (Netherlands), Belfast (UK), and Bogotá (Colombia). In these cases, priorities often related to the key aspects that should accompany the creation or further development of a city brand. This often involved focus groups with the main place's stakeholders, public events, digital consultations, interviews, workshops, and so on. For instance, Kalandides (2011) explains that focus groups were used in Bogotá to find out what the residents wanted to see at the centre of the city brand and noted that workshop participants desired a clean and green city. They wanted Bogotá to become a pioneer in environmental and biodiversity protection, thereby pointing to clear priorities in terms of policies related to the development of the brand. Therefore, we can conclude that structures in charge of increasing place attractiveness may vary and that the approaches preferred can also strongly vary in terms of stakeholder participation. But in the end, the political side of the prioritisation process, which is a key aspect of the public sector, still counts for a lot.

Notes

- 1 www.pwc.com/m1/en/publications/road-safety/pwc-guide-on-reducing-road-fatalities.pdf.
- 2 www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/dfda/foreign-policy/implementing-foreign-policy.html.
- 3 www.publicmarketing.eu/_rubric/detail.php?rubric=News&nr=3924.
- 4 www.bcsd.de/suchergebnisse/?datei=pm_umfrage_stadtmarketing_im_profil.pdf.
- 5 <https://sap.mit.edu/article/standard/places-making>.
- 6 <https://soydanbay.com/2012/08/28/why-do-place-brands-fail-the-mistakes-of-the-consultant/>.
- 7 www.marketing-territorial.org/2020/12/les-marques-territoriales-sont-mortelles-elles-aussi.html.
- 8 www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-23756462.
- 9 www.onlylyon.com/les-ambassadeurs.
- 10 www.ngi.org.uk/newcastle-ambassador-programme/.
- 11 www.bcsd.de/suchergebnisse/?datei=web_bcsd_brosch_umfrage_2022_221121.pdf.
- 12 www.bwl-lexikon.de/wiki/rechtsformen/.

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8 Marketing tools in attractiveness policies



8.1 Introduction

The literature devotes much of its attention to the major role played by marketing and branding approaches in attractiveness policies. While these approaches have already been widely commented upon, the confusion between branding and marketing still remains. Moreover, although place marketing is often defined as a toolbox for attractiveness, there is to our knowledge no clear presentation of the tools used in place marketing. The main part of this chapter is therefore dedicated to these marketing tools and the use of the marketing mix in place attractiveness policies. Before that, we review the definitions of public marketing and public branding and how they are mobilised in public policies. In line with the previous chapters of this book, we then explain why these concepts, though not absent from many activities and projects run by public organisations, matter more particularly for place promotion and attractiveness.

8.2 What are public marketing and public branding?

Public marketing or *marketing in the public sector* revolves around the emergence and increased use of techniques, in public organisations, that were typically associated with private companies. A particularly influential contribution in this regard is Kotler and Levy's (1969) paper on "broadening the concept of marketing". It concerns on the one hand the users of marketing (not-for-profit organisations, administrations, political parties, etc.) and on the other hand the objects of marketing (public goods, people, social ideas such as human rights, environmental protection and behaviours such as donations, health care, demand for education, etc.). As emphasised in Part I of the book, while the development of marketing is justified since it can help improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the public service (Walsh, 1994), marketing is still often portrayed negatively (selling, manipulation) and efforts are conducted to banish this view (Bouzas-Lorenzo, 2010). The rise of marketing in the public sector is mostly attributable to the increasing responsibility and autonomy given to certain entities, state agencies especially. The popularity of governance mechanisms has also encouraged the development of marketing within the public sector (Eshuis and Klijn, 2012). The active involvement of citizens in

polymaking also plays a fundamental role, as highlighted by Bouzas-Lorenzo (2010, p. 123): “public administrations that take citizens into account will make use of marketing tools to adjust the content of their policies to the demands of the population”.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, many authors contest the direct application of private-sector marketing approaches and tools to the public sector based on several arguments. The two most common refer to the fact that the whole of society must be covered, and not only the most profitable segments of the market, and to the political component, as the promotion of public policies and services relies mostly on government activity. Moreover, public servants surveyed in several countries have shown a certain resistance to the introduction of marketing in public policies or have acknowledged the importance of marketing but did not know how it could help increase policy effectiveness (e.g., in Greece, see Antoniadis et al., 2019). In the public sector as well as in the not-for-profit sector, the concept of social marketing is increasingly being used. It has been defined as “the design, implementation and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product, planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research” (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971, p. 5). This form of marketing focuses more on behavioural goals relevant to the social good, such as the prevention of vandalism, speeding, or alcohol abuse. Laing (2003) prefers to talk about public services dominated by “social benefits” (e.g., customs and criminal justice) and, at the other end of the spectrum, “private benefits” (e.g., transport and housing).

The rise of marketing tools, and not only social-marketing tools, can be explained by this need to better respond to citizens’ needs and aspirations, the decline of governments’ budgets, and the increasing competition that has resulted from the liberalisation of the public sector. In this regard, Lamb Jr. (1987) explains that attendance at certain public swimming pools decreased when private aquatic parks opened. These elements and the example provided are in line with the aspects of public marketing presented in Part 1 of this book. A final remark on public marketing concerns the recurrent calls, in the 1980s, to marketers to solve public problems, as marketing was often increasingly regarded as a solution (Lamb Jr., 1987). This has contributed to the growing popularity of the concept in public organisations.

Public branding or branding in the public sector refers to a trusted and recognisable image that public organisations want to convey, either to encourage citizen consumption of the services provided or their participation in a specific programme, such as reducing littering on roads (e.g., the “Don’t Mess With Texas” campaign launched by the Texas Department of Transportation). Karens et al. (2015, p. 487) define it as a tool that “enables communication with citizens, facilitates a trusting relationship with citizens, and influences behaviours such as voting (political branding) or visits to a city (city branding) in a desired direction”. We add here that such a definition, in our view, should not be restricted to cities, as regions and countries can also brand themselves for similar purposes.

In addition, Wæraas (2008) explains that diverse types of public-sector organisations, including universities and hospitals, are now increasingly expressing their values and identity through logos and slogans, and paying more attention to their reputation. Typical examples include UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles, California, and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in the UK. The main difficulty regarding public brands' implementation concerns the inconsistent values and multiple identities that characterise public organisations. While corporate brands, in the private sector, rely on consistency, enabling them to express themselves as a single identity, public organisations must serve the public interest, facing dilemmas when they accommodate both the general interest and the interest of individuals at the same time (see the example provided in the following by Wesley and Murray (2021) in the Canadian context).

This multiplicity of identities is summarised by Wæraas (2008, p. 212):

members of units who primarily perform regulatory, controlling, or coercive functions may see themselves primarily as caseworkers operating on the basis of values such as law and rule orientation, justice, and equality. In contrast, members who provide help and service, and primarily relate to values such as customer, service, and client orientation, are likely to downplay the bureaucratic aspects of the organisation considerably.

While this may appear as a disadvantage, public organisations can define themselves in diverse ways and better match the expectations of their stakeholders, who also have various needs and interests. This is important, because public organisations serve the general interest, and not merely selected segments of the market. Temporal (2015) adds to intra-brand competition and inclusiveness issues a specific public-sector challenge: the fact that organisations must balance, in their branding efforts, long-term policies with short-term political objectives. Cities, regions, and countries react differently to these issues and put in place structures that can strongly differ from one case to another, ranging from the absence of any reaction to the creation of bodies dedicated to branding. In this regard, South Korea founded the Presidential Council on Nation Branding in January 2009 (Kim, 2016).

Temporal (2015) distinguishes between a brand and brand communications, which require a proper strategy. Such a strategy relies on three main elements, focusing on: (1) how target groups should feel about the brand, (2) how they come to believe in the brand, and (3) how preferences and loyalty to the brand will grow. Objectives should be set, and the strategy should be implemented through various tools: advertisements, websites, public relations, promotion, points of sales, and so on. Communication campaigns have proven creative on certain occasions, leading to great successes. One of them was the "Best job in the world" campaign launched by Tourism Queensland, offering selected individuals a job to take care of the Great Barrier Reef and then travel around the neighbouring islands, writing on blogs to tell their travel stories. While run on a tight budget, this campaign benefited from extensive media coverage and used social media intensively. Branding places, the

public service as a whole, or specific policies require efficient communication strategies, which should also be evaluated professionally.

However, public organisations still face a challenge in terms of branding, because differentiation and uniqueness, two characteristics often associated with (successful) brands, often meet with resistance from public administrators. In this regard, Sataøen and Wæraas (2015) present the case of Norwegian hospitals, which now operate in an environment that strongly encourages cost minimisation and competition. Nevertheless, making hospitals different and developing strong brands that resemble corporate ones is rejected by most communication managers. In contrast, contributing to the common good, serving the public, and demonstrating conformity remain crucial to increasing public legitimacy. Consequently, these three aspects are central in hospitals’ communications, more than promoting them through brands that emphasise unique and differentiated organisations.

More generally, in line with the purpose of our book, Wæraas et al. (2015) write that places are not only geographical spaces but also political organisations and service providers. As a result, places should develop unique brands to stand in terms of attractiveness on all three elements just mentioned. As geographical spaces, places can promote their history, culture, and nature and make sure that their residents feel connected to the promoted aspects of the place. As service-providing entities, places can emphasise their reputation through the quality of the goods produced and the services provided to recipients, that is, the target groups of the branding process. And finally, as political institutions, places can put forward their stability and openness (especially in democratic regimes) to ensure continued citizen support for the system and the implementation of policies. Here, competence and benevolence are key components of trustworthiness, a prerequisite to a well-functioning society (Mabillard, 2022). The three approaches to branding places are presented in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Three strategies for place branding

<i>Place as</i>			
	<i>Geographical entity</i>	<i>Service provider</i>	<i>Political organisation</i>
<i>Brand type</i>	<i>Place branding</i>	<i>Corporate branding</i>	<i>Democratic branding</i>
Brand characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History, culture, nature • Local attractions leisure activities • Economic potential of the place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative culture • Service quality • Work environment, skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral system • Core values of the democratic regime
Desired reputation	Attractive destination, good quality of life, business-friendly place	Good service provider, employer, and workplace	Well-functioning local democracy and trustworthy politicians

Source: Adapted from Wæraas et al. (2015)

8.3 Marketing and branding (in) public policies

According to Proctor (2007), there are diverse ways to “sell policies”: through “marketisation”, when public services compete with services delivered by other organisations in a marketplace; through place marketing, which will be further developed in the following; or through instrumental measures, to promote key political objectives. Regarding this last point, Ingram et al. (1995) provide a fine illustration of a public programme that aimed at encouraging women to get access to early and continuous prenatal care. The project, developed by the Alabama Medicaid Agency and an advisory board of healthcare professionals, was endorsed by physicians in the state. It consisted in the distribution of a booklet that contained coupons for free and discounted items, which was available on request through the “Healthy Beginnings” hotline (free telephone number). Coupons were then sent directly, via mail, to recipients. The use of this marketing tool resulted from an initial analysis of the target group: since most women who suffered from insufficient care were poor, it was assumed that rewarding them with items of value might change their behaviour and boost prenatal care in a state characterised by very high rates of infant mortality at the time.

The programme proved quite successful, with many women benefiting from prenatal care; in this regard, Ingram et al. (1995, p. 49) argue that “a carefully structured, well-managed incentive program can serve as an effective adjunct to obstetrical care programs for poor and uninsured women”. However, it must be remembered here that marketing is not “magic” and that public issues still rely on many factors, the most important ones probably being political priorities, the composition of the population, and, most importantly, poverty. As of 2020, Alabama remains one of the US states with the highest rate of infant mortality (6.99 per 1000 live births), the other poor-scoring states being also the poorest US states (e.g., Mississippi and Louisiana).¹ In this regard, Butler and Collins (1995, p. 95) affirm that “it would be arrogant and ignorant of marketing professionals to presume that a marketing ‘box of tricks’ could be carried to the public sector arena as a panacea for its ills”.

Butler and Collins (1995) explain that a global approach to marketing public services and policies includes principles, context, industry, and specific situations related to the industry concerned. General principles refer to marketing concepts, approaches, and theories; the context relates to the type of marketing preferred; and the “industry” level includes the main domains/sectors to which marketing is applied (Figure 8.1).

While we agree that healthcare is a core policy domain in most countries, we argue that tourism and education marketing, in most cases, also belong to public-sector marketing, as does place marketing. This point will be further discussed in the next section of this chapter. However, what is interesting to note in the authors’ contribution is the difficulty, in most policies and services provided by public-sector organisations, of properly and easily identifying which agency or department provides which service. This makes it difficult to reinforce the image of that specific organisation. As a result, education about services and policies may help

General marketing concepts, approaches, and theories			Principles
Fast-moving consumer goods	Public sector marketing	Services marketing	Context
Tourism marketing	Healthcare marketing	Education marketing	Industry

Figure 8.1 Conceptual framework for public-sector marketing

Source: Based on Butler and Collins (1995)

citizens better identify the organisations in charge and at the same time help public bodies achieve their policy goals. For instance, Snaveley (1991) proposes the use of various marketing tools to that end. In the case of the tax system, focus groups of taxpayers can be organised; methods for detecting cheating can be advertised; and, more recently (since the article dates back to 1991), online platforms to encourage citizens to pay their taxes can be promoted. It should be noted here that citizens are not the only target; indeed, certain businesses may also benefit from these marketing efforts, especially those specialised in tax services.

As a result, governments have increasingly purchased advertisements in promotional venues (Walsh, 1994), and more recently online. We can provide several examples of the growing importance of marketing practices and approaches. For instance, the Public Health England Strategy 2017–2020² stressed the need to mobilise “tools and techniques from independent sector marketing and [repurpose] them for the public good, [and design] marketing programmes that have already changed the behaviour of millions of people”. Thus, under the strategy, marketing campaigns were launched to: (1) provide relevant information to the public about health; (2) create an environment that is conducive to behavioural changes, fostering cultural acceptance of healthy behaviours; (3) offer the necessary tools to people that start or maintain these behavioural changes; (4) help people access the right services through the support of the National Health Service (NHS); and (5) support the partners from the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. Recently, the Belgian Superior Health Council published a report entitled “Reducing Exposure of Children, Including Adolescents, to Unhealthy Food Through Media and Marketing in Belgium”.³ It underlined the importance of accompanying regulations with marketing actions, especially through education, to empower children and their caregivers and through the regular monitoring of the marketing campaigns targeted at children on various platforms, including digital media.

Branding of policies and branding activities as part of public policies are also on the rise (Leijerholt et al., 2019). This phenomenon receives less attention for several reasons, including the fact that many public servants do not see themselves as marketers but rather as policy implementers. However, Wesley and Murray (2021, p. 1079) recall that “when [Canadian] public administrators operate state lotteries or retail liquor stores, they are inevitably taking on the marketing function”. The

specificity of the public sector lies in the tension that characterises the situation in which these public servants find themselves. Indeed, while they have to promote liquor stores and lotteries, they must at the same time encourage responsible drinking and gambling. Certain target groups also call for a demarketing effort: for example, minors, drivers, and pregnant women should not consume alcohol. In Canada, branding is used as a marketing tactic to promote government-provided goods, including demarketing efforts in some cases, such as the alcohol example provided previously. According to Wesley and Murray (2021, p. 1085), “by building associations with responsible consumption and bureaucratic control into their brands, and/or purposefully dulling down the excitement of the products on offer, governments may seek to depress consumer demand, or shape it to less destructive ends”.

As a result, brands can play a significant part in the marketing activities carried out by public authorities to encourage or discourage the acquisition or consumption of a certain good or service. Regarding branding specifically, public-sector marketing and demarketing tactics can take three main forms (Wesley and Murray, 2021):

- Marketing tactics aimed at selling public-sector goods/services, such as through the active promotion of these goods/services (the creation of positive brand associations is expected to increase demand);
- Demarketing tactics aimed at regulating private-sector sales, such as through the active promotion of alternative goods/services (the creation of negative brand associations is expected to reduce or eliminate demand);
- Demarketing tactics aimed at selling public-sector goods/services, such as through education and the active promotion of responsible behaviour (brand associations take into account the related harm and risks).

In the case of cannabis and liquor stores, the Canadian provinces developed brands aimed at supporting their marketing strategy. Obviously, other tools were used, and, in some provinces, promotional offers were made. In the case of Manitoba, the provision of air miles enabled retailers to acquire data on consumers' behaviour and habits. Wesley and Murray (2021) argue that branding processes not only reflect public-policy goals but ultimately affect their achievement and should therefore not be underestimated. These thoughts are shared by Eshuis and Klijn (2012), who show that policies can be branded in order to reach their goals. In the case of urban renewal, for instance, positivity, power, and association of people in the name of the policy has helped reinforce feelings of responsiveness and empathy for state actions. Urban renewal in the Netherlands was branded as a community power policy. This results from the position of both politicians and managers, who want “to create brands for policy objects, policy processes, and themselves to manage perceptions, activate and bind actors, and maintain their authority in mediated governance processes” (Eshuis and Klijn, 2012, p. 3). The central role played by these politicians and managers also highlights the importance of budgets and performance in creating and maintaining positive perceptions of the brand.

Other examples of policy branding include public-health campaigns and review processes (Marsh and Fawcett, 2011). Some authors also see opportunities for

branding campaigns to change attitudes in other sectors. For example, Alserhan (2012) presents how difficult it is for public and private organisations to hire local employees in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The employment policy relates to the “Emiratisation” process, that is, “the recruitment and development of UAE nationals to increase their employability, thus reducing the country’s dependence on the expatriate workforce” (Alserhan, 2012, p. 424). Since locals regard most job positions negatively, and companies consider the locals the best employees on the job market, these perceptions could be modified through legislation changes as well as a wide branding campaign. Despite this call by Alserhan (2012) and other authors, the situation has not evolved much in the country in terms of employment, with a minor modification in the legislation in 2023: private companies must have 2% of Emiratis in their employees or they will pay fines for noncompliance with the law.⁴

We want to add here that such branding processes differ significantly from what is regarded as political branding. Here, branding through logos and slogans is a tool that contributes to global marketing efforts deployed by political candidates, leaders, and parties in electoral times and during their mandates. Other tools include polling and customer segmentation, as well as targeting voters on specific media platforms (increasingly on social media, as shown in the US presidential campaigns especially). According to Eshuis and Klijn (2012), these tools have existed for a long time, and not only in the US, as illustrated by the “Third Way” brand used by Tony Blair’s party in the late 1990s. Political branding has grown because of the increased visibility of politicians, especially on television and online; the increased proximity between politicians and citizens; and the increased importance of style and emotions, political rallies now being evaluated in a way similar to popular cultural events.

This importance of emotions highlights the need to develop a strong image and to stimulate positive associations through pictures, videos, and live events in a competitive environment. Places do not escape this reality; indeed, their attractiveness for both internal and external actors relies increasingly on efficient communications, which constitute a central part of the branding process and expression of the brand. This does absolutely not mean that brands limit themselves to logos and slogans, as already mentioned in Chapter 4 of this book. As Eshuis and Klijn (2012) explain, brands build a web of associations in the consumers’ minds; they add value to a given object or product; they make an object or product stand out from competitors’ brands; and they manifest themselves through a sign, design, logo, name, and/or slogan. This is crucial for places, since most of them want to distinguish themselves from other places and believe that a strong brand will help them significantly in this regard.

8.4 Marketing and branding places

How do the elements presented previously translate into place branding and marketing? First, as already emphasised in Part I of the book, the competition between different places, both at different levels of government and beyond administrative

borders, is of particular interest for implementing marketing approaches. In a globalised economy, places must react quickly and adopt instruments that respond to the preferences of their target groups, an essential move to maintain their vitality. As a result, a higher demand for attractiveness and strategic tools has developed, and should be addressed accordingly. These target groups may be attracted to or retained within a place through the use of coordinated marketing tools, in line with our definition of place marketing. Therefore, place marketing can be addressed as a specific form of marketing, in the public sector, that points to diverse sectors and calls for the better coordination of public policies. If we want to include it within the framework created by Butler and Collins (1995), it will directly relate to tourism marketing (Table 8.1) but will also connect to other types of marketing as well, including investment and other policy-related marketing efforts aimed at attracting and retaining target groups. An adaptation of this conceptual effort is provided in Figure 8.2.

However, the popularity and widespread use of the term led to conceptual confusion, while the implementation of place marketing was (and to a large extent still is) limited to methods and techniques of the original field of application of marketing and often related to promotional measures exclusively (Kavaratzis, 2004). But place marketing goes beyond promotion solely and differs from political communication. It is a lengthy process that requires a collective approach to harnessing a place’s attractiveness. According to Warnaby and Medway (2013), places that are subject to branding and marketing activities are much more complex than most products or services usually provided by organisations, especially due to their materiality. In contrast, as already highlighted in Chapter 5, meanings, associations, representations, and feelings characterise places. These aspects also depend quite heavily on stakeholders’ differing perceptions. As Warnaby and Medway (2013, p. 351) put it, “some aspects of the place are emphasised and others marginalised or ignored, possibly along with the individuals/groups for whom this alternative narrative is their dominant perception and experience of the place in question”.

Consequently, from the initial reflection about the promotion of a place to the evaluation of the marketing strategy designed and implemented, there is a long way to go that should certainly not be overlooked and replaced by the rapid development of a logo and a slogan. In addition, the coordinated use of marketing instruments is

General marketing concepts, approaches, and theories			Principles
Fast-moving consumer goods	Public-sector marketing	Services marketing	Context
<i>Place marketing</i>			
Tourism marketing	Investment marketing	...	Industry

Figure 8.2 Conceptual framework for place marketing

Source: Adapted from Butler and Collins (1995)

very important (Eshuis et al., 2014), as a good mix contributes to the effectiveness of the place-marketing process. The various elements of this mix, following the classical 4Ps approach, are presented in the final section of this chapter.

As detailed in Chapter 4, the increasing use of the term branding has led many scholars to prefer this notion over marketing, although it has not disappeared from the literature. Many governments have, for a long time, attempted to shape a “sense of place” among the population, mainly for legitimacy purposes. According to Ashworth (2009, p. 10), “branding seems to offer just an extension and refinement of this possibility and has been eagerly embraced by many place managers”. These efforts were also aimed at distinguishing, praising, and affirming the superiority of a system over the ones found in competitor cities or regions. They are not completely new, since attempts to disseminate such ideas date back to at least Ancient Greece, when Athens and Sparta tried to impose their democratic v. oligarchic values on other cities. The efforts to support the values of a certain political and social system were recounted by Thucydides, who reported that Pericles glorified Athens’ achievements and praised equality and openness during his funeral oration (late 5th century BCE).

Place branding is one of the five forms of branding identified by Eshuis and Klijn (2012): it focuses on geographical spaces (cities, regions, and nations). The other forms of branding in the public sector refer to: (1) tangible goods, such as public infrastructure like bridges and tunnels (goods branding); (2) process branding (e.g., joined-up governance); (3) person branding (e.g., political leaders); and (4) organisational branding (of a department or an agency, e.g., NASA). Therefore, place branding is a specific type of branding in the public sector and may be the most famous of all from both a research/academic point of view and practical perspective, with the creation of brand managers in certain cases (see the example of Ghent in Box 4.2).

The power of the brand notion resides in its expected capacity to carry positive meanings and associations, by reducing risk (and therefore increasing trust in a place, e.g., as a suitable location for raising a family), adding value (e.g., increase in housing prices), or promising a pleasurable experience (Eshuis and Edelenbos, 2009). These positive associations should therefore reinforce a place’s attractiveness by appealing to residents and external target groups, provided these brand associations connect with their wishes, aspirations, and needs. In sum, branding serves the purpose of marketing by providing an additional technique to improve a place’s image. Place branding, together with communication policies and media strategies, among other activities, is therefore an essential part of strategic place-image management (Braun, 2008).

In his contribution, Ashworth (2009) reminds us that place branding is a delicate exercise, because it does not only involve public organisations, which would control it perfectly. Other actors contribute to meanings and feelings associated with a place, for better or worse. However, there are instruments of place branding that can be used by public authorities to increase a place’s attractiveness. The first of these tools is flagship monuments. Again, this is not a completely new idea: the Colosseum in Rome and the Parthenon in Athens were statements about the

governments that built them. With the more recent construction of, for example, the Centre Pompidou and the Guggenheim Museum, the term “Guggenheiming” is increasingly used to define this instrument of place branding. The second tool is the development of flagship districts (London’s Canary Wharf and Dublin’s Docklands, for example) that may become a brand for the whole city or region. Ashworth (2009, p. 18), argues that “a small part of the place, often no more than a few streets, serves the function of adding a distinctive component to the image of the place as a whole”. The third tool relates to the organisation of events by the place, such as the “European Capital of Culture” that changes location (city) every year. The success of the branding process usually relies on a good mix of several instruments, as illustrated by the case of Dublin. Combining tools to achieve success can also be applied to marketing and translated to place marketing specifically. This will be dealt with in the last section of this chapter.

8.5 Marketing tools applied to place marketing/branding

As already highlighted in Part I of this book, the transition of a business-management concept to the public sector involves challenges. For example, the elements that form the marketing mix need to be adapted to be relevant in a public-sector environment. In this regard, Kotler and Lee (2007, p. 12) add that

many public-sector managers know that marketing is more than communications or sales, but they don’t know the ‘magic’ that makes it work. Once they understand the four Ps—products, price, place, and promotion—they can use them to transform their communication with the public and improve their performance.

While the general definition of marketing—the long-term strategy to identify the markets to be exploited, objectives to be reached, the positioning of the offer, and tools of the marketing mix to be used (Pasquier and Villeneuve, 2018)—may hold in place marketing, the 4Ps need to be refined. As a reminder:

- Product refers to the development of popular products and services (e.g., quality, design and name of the brand);
- Price refers to the setting of motivating prices, incentives, and disincentives;
- Place refers to the optimisation of the channels of distribution for products/services;
- Promotion refers to effective communication—such as through advertisements, public relations, and sponsoring—with key public segments.

This marketing mix can be defined as the combination of outward-looking marketing policy instruments through which an organisation attempts to exert direct influence on other market players relevant to its sales and to influence their market behaviour in line with the organisation’s marketing objectives. It requires the harmonisation of communications and coordination at two levels: first, the development of a global vision for the marketing of the place, including a strategy and

clear objectives and second, the coordination of the activities targeted at specific individuals and/or groups. In this regard, segmentation also constitutes an essential part of the marketing process: what are the distinct subsets of target groups that a place wants to attract, and how (Braun, 2008)?

In the case of public services, the 4Ps mentioned previously may seem quite easy to identify in many instances, especially for paid services. For example, campaigns have been run in many countries to encourage young people to use public transport, focusing on reduced prices and promoting the offering through advertisements and posters visible near schools and in the bus, metro, or train stops. In the case of places, Kotler et al. (1993) mention four aims: (1) define the right mix of community features, goods, and services to provide; (2) enhance the attractiveness of these goods and services for the target groups; (3) ensure their delivery in an accessible way and efficiently; and (4) promote the place's values and image (e.g., through a branding communication strategy).

The implementation of any marketing or branding strategy requires the use of instruments or tools, without which intentions will remain empty words. In the classic case of a product such as those served in a fast-food chain, there should be a range of products (different kinds of hamburgers, sandwiches, or other products that are easily consumed); a price list for these goods; locations held either by the company or by third parties (e.g., franchises); and finally communication (advertising, posts on social media) to publicise the brand, the products, and the locations. Everyone understands that a business is doomed to failure if there are no products, no locations, no prices, or no communication. The combination of these necessary marketing instruments is called the marketing mix. This term was first defined by Borden in 1964 with reference to a publication by Culliton (1948), who analogised marketing tools to a "mixer of ingredients". The basic idea is relatively simple: to carry out a marketing strategy, a list of ingredients or tools is available, and they should be used as a clean recipe for success in a market.

In his article, Borden (1964) lists 12 elements, including branding, that can be used by goods producers. For pedagogical purposes mostly, McCarthy (1960) grouped all these instruments into four groups, the famous 4Ps already mentioned: product, price, promotion (communication), and place (distribution). Subsequently, numerous publications (e.g., van Waterschoot et al., 1992; Constantinides, 2006) have proposed different lists and structures adapted to the evolution of marketing. Today, it is commonly accepted that there are seven groups, particularly to take account of the evolution of services from the 1990s onwards:

- Product: product policy
- Price: price policy and tariffs
- Promotion: communication and promotion policy
- Place: distribution policy
- People: people's behaviour and organisational culture
- Process: work processes and their optimisation
- Physical evidence: physical elements or evidence that support the marketing activities (such as representative buildings for a bank).

Efforts to structure these instruments are always supported by a pedagogical objective. It is easy to understand that one can deviate from such structures as long as one takes into account the following elements:

- Whatever the structure chosen, it is especially important to know the tools or ingredients available; by analogy with culinary recipes, the same ingredients are not used to make a soup and a sandwich. This knowledge about ingredients is essential because it is the basis for the recipe's success. Regarding place marketing, it may well be wrong to use the classic instruments of product or service marketing, especially because most of these instruments are inappropriate for place promotion. For example, on the one hand, a company develops its product or services as it wishes. On the other hand, a place cannot freely change its characteristics and dispose of them as it wishes. A rural area that is far from a conurbation and does not have a specific tourist or cultural offering will have great difficulty attracting businesses, tourists, or new residents. It will sometimes have to devote most of its efforts to keeping young residents in the area and ensuring that essential public services are maintained. Conversely, an area with a good location and beautiful views will have less problem attracting tourists and developing a residential offering that will enable it to attract people with a comfortable income. A place's characteristics are not static, but the design of the "product" is not the same as that of a company or even a public organisation.
- The mix of ingredients: as in cooking, how ingredients are combined is essential. For a cake, you can be satisfied with a ready-made formula or even with bags where the ingredients are already mixed, or you can develop your own recipe. No one will be surprised by a very standard taste if the recipe is not one that is developed. For a place, a brand and a logo without much originality will often remain bland, tasteless. The same assessment can be made if the brand does not reflect the values the place and its stakeholders want to convey and does not appeal to the targets defined in the strategy. In this regard, successful place promotion requires thinking carefully about the ingredients to be used, testing the recipes, and having a certain originality. Otherwise, place-promotion efforts will remain both bland and easily interchangeable.
- Dosing: The final reference to gastronomy is that ingredients or instruments should be dosed in an optimal way. As will be explained in Chapter 13, the resources devoted to the instruments should be adapted (efficiency thresholds). It is not uncommon to see a place-promotion process limited to the creation of a logo and the organisation of an event to promote it, after which practically nothing else occurs. The effectiveness of this measure will be very limited, if not zero. Conversely, overdosing, which is rarer due to the cost of using the instruments, can cause a rejection effect. When we see the costs of organising a football World Cup or the Olympic Games, which amount to billions of dollars, we quickly understand that underdosing is much more frequent than overdosing.

The first task in place promotion is therefore to identify the instruments available. As mentioned, it is not a question of aiming for an exhaustive list of these


instruments but rather the main categories and tools. Without rejecting the reference to the 7Ps, it is advisable to distance oneself from this framework, because a territory does not have the same freedom in the conception of marketing instruments as a company. Moreover, and this is one of the particularities of the public sector and of place promotion, the brand has other functions than the initial goal of contributing to the development of sales. Indeed, the brand also aims to federate residents (sense of belonging or pride) around it, increase a place's visibility on a national or international scale, and contribute to developing, in certain cases, a country's soft power (through reliability, participation in networks, etc.).

In line with this book's rationale, which considers that branding is complementary to marketing, and that there is no hierarchical relationship between the two concepts, the instruments available for place promotion are listed in Table 8.2. The tools presented tend primarily to support the brand or the marketing of a place. In the continuum between the two, we can mention first of all political events, which, in addition to the priority political objectives, aim to make the region known and to associate it with corresponding values.

Organising international conferences or events is a typical example of objectives that many countries or regions seek to pursue to promote themselves. In order to organise a COP (Conference of the Parties, a meeting of the signatory countries to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), countries have to apply and pay the costs, which are estimated at several US\$ hundred million for several tens of thousands of participants. The organisation of such an event is obviously not part of a marketing approach, but it can contribute to raising the profile of a country and a city and, depending on the activities associated with the conference, to associating the country or city with the values and results of the conference. As the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the city of Lausanne, Switzerland, was recognised as an Olympic city in 1994, even though it has never held the games. It can therefore participate in the network of Olympic cities and benefit from this network. All these activities help to increase a region's reputation, to build networks, and in general to develop soft power,⁵ even if it is almost never possible to measure their effectiveness. In addition to these eminently political activities, we can add all the events that are organised specifically to give visibility to the region as a brand, such as press conferences, participation in fairs, and so on (distribution of balloons, stickers, organisation of competitions, discussion with brand managers, etc.).

Public events are similar to political events but differ in that they are aimed at a large audience and, in principle, attract many visitors who contribute to the tourist and commercial activity of the country or region (Alaux and Boutard, 2017). The best-known tool is the organisation of major cultural and sporting events (see Box 8.1). The Olympic Games, sports championships (athletics, football, hockey, etc.), cycling races (Tour de France), or sailing races (Vendée Globe) are all sporting events associated with a country, region, or city and directly contribute to their reputation, usually convey positive values, and attract a large number of visitors.

Table 8.2 Marketing instruments for place promotion

							
<i>Branding</i>							<i>Marketing</i>
<i>Political events</i>	<i>Public events</i>	<i>Public relations</i>	<i>Communication</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>	<i>Offices</i>	<i>Pricing</i>	<i>Products and services</i>
Conferences	Major sport and cultural events	Newsletter	Advertising campaign	Flagship	Tourist office	Fiscal status, tax packages	Package for tourists or residents
Event for brand promotion	Participation to exhibition	Ambassadors	Social media	Various infrastructure (culture, education, mobility, housing, etc.)	Promotion agency	Tax policy for companies	Events for residents or tourists
Political tours		Influencers			Representation abroad		Package for company
		Press trips					Events for company

Such public events therefore support the promotion of tourism and trade. However, it is important not to stop at sporting events and to also consider cultural events, as well as natural and heritage events.

Box 8.1 Branding Qatar

Qatar's small size (about half of the metropolitan area of the city of Chicago, for example) and the fact that it shares its only land border with its much bigger neighbour, Saudi Arabia, is often cited as one of the main reasons that the country is pursuing an aggressive nation-branding strategy. It is a hereditary monarchy and generally described as a soft-authoritarian regime by academic observers. The origins of Qatar's statehood are tied to the expansion of the British Empire, representatives of which signed the first political association agreement with members of the Al-Thani royal family in the late 19th century. For much of the 20th century, Qatar was a British protectorate until its independence in 1971, the same year a large natural-gas field was discovered close to its northern shores, rents from which would become the main source of its ensuing economic boom. Since independence and with increased speed from the mid-1990s onwards, Qatar has undergone enormous political, economic, and cultural change, developing from one of the region's poorest countries to one of the richest and most recognisable (Kamrava, 2013). Part of this transformation has certainly been the Qatari royal family's investments in the country's nation branding, driven by but not limited to a large number of cultural, political, and architectural prestige projects to increase the state's international profile (Eggeling, 2017).

The earliest high-profile project was the launch of the TV station Al Jazeera in 1996. Initially a Saudi project, the former emir of Qatar, Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, claimed the project for Qatar. Al Jazeera was the first of a long string of projects that came to kick off the "Hamad era" in Qatari domestic and foreign politics. Against a background of fast-paced economic development, a close military alliance with the US, and increasing integration into a globalising world, this era became characterised by the launch of an ambitious international image-making strategy that spanned nearly all sectors of public and political life in Qatar. Investment in four sectors in particular became the hallmark of "selling" Qatar to international audiences: sports, urban development, culture, and higher education (Eggeling, 2020).

Following its hosting of the FIFA men's football World Cup in December 2022, Qatar's involvement and investments in the international sporting world have received increased attention. While this attention peaked in the second half of 2022, Qatar's investments in this sector reach back almost three decades. As early as 1993, Sheikh Saoud Al-Thani, a member of the Qatari royal family and the Qatar Olympic committee, told the *New York Times* that "[investments in sports] is the policy of the government, our way

of making Qatar more known to the world” (Clarey, 1993). Since then, Qatar has hosted numerous international sporting events (e.g., the 2006 Asian Games and the 2011 Arab Games), and has attracted further attention by purchasing foreign football teams (most notably Paris St-Germain), opening an Olympic sports training facility and hospital in Doha (Aspire Zone), and investing in other sporting successes, such as the Qatari high jumper with Sudanese roots, Mutaz Barshim (Eggeling, 2021). Being a rentier state, projects such as investments in the sports sector are funded primarily through the sale of natural gas, that is collected and distributed via the Qatar Investment Authority, the country’s wealth fund. While it is difficult to estimate how much money Qatar has spent since the 1990s on cross-sectoral development projects with a branding element, most observers locate this number in the high three-digit US\$ billions (Foxman and Nair, 2022). Forbes reported that Qatar had spent more than US\$ 220 billion on the hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup (Flynn, 2022).

The cornerstones of Qatar’s nation-branding have been formalised in the *Qatari National Vision*, a political vision document published in July 2008 at the peak of Qatar’s economic boom (with per-capita GDP briefly reaching an all-time high of approximately US\$ 100,000). The vision was published by the General Secretariat for Development and Planning (GSDP), an independent government agency set up to monitor and deliver it. A 40-page document written in confident if vague language, the national vision is structured around the four key pillars of economic, human, social, and environmental development and outlines Qatar’s international position and ambitions as well as its domestic opportunities and challenges (Alderman and Eggeling, 2023). Besides the GSDP and the Office of the Emir as overseers of how Qatar’s (inter)national image is constructed and communicated, Qatar has also worked with several international consultancies and advisory bodies. For example, to set up Education City, its campus of international universities that houses prestigious institutions like Georgetown University and Carnegie Mellon, the Office of the Emir worked together with the American RAND Corporation to reform Qatar’s higher education sector (Eggeling, 2020).

In recent years and especially since being awarded the FIFA World Cup in 2010, the key challenge of the Qatari nation-branding programme has been the considerable international backlash—with claims of slavery, inhuman working conditions, and other human-rights abuses—that has accompanied Qatar’s attempts to charm and capture international audiences. In this context, the 2022 World Cup and the plight of migrant workers (Panja and Sharma, 2022) is discussed, especially in Western media, as a textbook case of how not to host an international sporting event and how not to do nation branding more broadly. While only time will tell whether Qatar will be able to keep some of its positive promises surrounding this event (for example, the sustainability and corporate social responsibility linked to “modular stadia”), the reputational legacy associated with the event will always fall short

of the immense human cost of staging it. It is morally unacceptable that people must suffer for the purpose of creating a (sporting, or other) destination brand, and any scholars and practitioners working on nation branding must consider the Qatari case a reminder that branding practices are not abstract marketing tools but linked to real places and the lives of real people.

Box written by Kristin A. Eggeling.

An emblematic example of cultural events that can be mentioned here is the “European Capitals of Culture” title attributed to cities each year.⁶ Initiated by Greece to promote the richness and diversity of the continent’s cultures, this EU programme consists of designating one or several European cities (both inside and outside the EU) for a year, during which a programme of cultural events is organised. The benefits for these cities are multiple (Leloup and Moyart, 2018; Arezki et al., 2018): enhancement of their cultural heritage, federating stakeholders around a common objective, learning how to develop collective projects, increasing notoriety, attracting significant tourist flows, and so on. To these examples, we can add music festivals, large temporary museum exhibitions, folklore events, and so on. Natural and heritage enhancements are other measures to promote territorial development. The listing of cultural assets or natural sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List, although primarily aimed at collective protection, contributes to a region’s visibility and is likely to boost tourism. It is important to specify that all of these public events that reinforce place attractiveness are organised primarily within the framework of a sectoral public policy (culture, sport) or are the result of private actors’ initiatives. It is their integration into a set of promotional measures that will really enable a place to benefit from these events.

Participation in exhibitions and fairs is also a way of contributing to the development of the place brand. A typical example is a country’s participation in world exhibitions (the Expo 2025 will be held in Osaka, Japan, around the theme “Designing Future Society for Our Lives”).⁷ Other examples include all the fairs and events where a country, region, or city is invited and can present and develop its assets. For most places, finding manifestations or events where they can support and promote their place brand is generally not difficult. Acquiring the resources required to develop and maintain their presence in these events, and over time, may however prove much more challenging.

Classical public-relations activities are part of the range of instruments available to places for their promotion. Unlike the events presented previously, these activities are designed and carried out specifically for promotional purposes. Without being exhaustive, we can mention newsletters, which provide information about activities and maintain a regular link with interested companies and people. Ambassadors are also a very important tool for promoting a place, as mentioned in Chapter 7. They are personalities who have lived or are living in the place and whose fame and/or activities are associated with the promotion of that place. These

ambassadors will agree to be highlighted on websites or in brochures, will participate in conferences or events, and/or will write posts or commit to relaying posts on their social media accounts. Relying on famous personalities is not new, but the phenomenon tends to increase in the public sector (e.g., influencers used by certain regions to help communicate about prevention measures, in health campaigns, etc.) and in the promotion of places. While the benefits of profiling a region through well-known personalities are great, the risks and problems potentially generated by such partnerships should not be underestimated. There are many examples of private brands that have decided to break contracts with their ambassadors: Adidas ended its contract with Kanye West because of his antisemitic remarks, Lacoste broke its contract with the rapper Moha La Squala following accusations of sexual assault, and so on. Places are no exception to this phenomenon. Recently, for example, the organisation in charge of promoting the Swiss canton of Vaud withdrew the title of honorary member from the explorer Mike Horn (a resident of the region) in the light of revelations about his military past in South Africa.

With the emergence of social-media influencers, who address very large communities directly via their posts, places have obviously identified the formidable potential of these figures, especially in terms of tourism promotion. Similarly, the production of films or series in regions contributes to making these places known. Fans of Commissioner Montalbano will visit the villages of southern Sicily, while those of Commissioner Dupin will go to Brittany. Tours of these locations are offered to reader-tourists, who flock to them.

Communication campaigns typically include posting content on a place's websites (city or region, tourism offices, economic development agencies, etc.), advertising campaigns, social-media posts, the issue and distribution of printed documents and flyers, and any communication activity organised and paid for by the place for its own promotion. Almost every place has such activities. However, communication campaigns usually require significant resources either to design the campaign or to disseminate information through different media channels (mainly television, newspapers, and websites).

In addition, infrastructures that contribute to the development of a place also belong in the marketing toolbox. It should not be understood that any equipment or infrastructure that is developed is necessarily part of a promotional perspective. But some, such as emblematic buildings, new model districts, or housing for new residents, among others, can strongly support a place's development.

Often forgotten, promotion offices are the distribution structure for tourism and business support. Tourist offices organise tourist offerings, advise tourists, promote the region through campaigns, and so on. They act as distribution and sales organisations for services related to the place. Economic-promotion offices work in the same way to attract new companies by offering them locations, accompanying them in their procedures, granting tax benefits where available, and so on. Even if there is no monetary exchange, as in the case of a distribution system, these offices serve as a sort of sales structure for the place towards defined audiences. To this should be added the representation systems where companies (trustees, consultants) or independent persons are responsible for establishing contacts and relaying

them to promotion offices: some regions do not have the resources to approach companies abroad and rely on representations of this kind to establish connections. In contrast, certain countries or regions have special “houses” abroad, sometimes hosted by the country’s embassy. They can also have active networks, with offices abroad, or organise trade missions on a regular basis (e.g., once a year). The example of Newcastle (see Box 8.2) shows the importance of promotional structures in place-development strategies.

Box 8.2 The case of NewcastleGateshead Initiative (NGI), United Kingdom

Located on the River Tyne’s northern bank, Newcastle is a city in Tyne and Wear, England. It is one of the fastest-growing cities in the northeast of England. In 2000, a unified marketing brand name, NewcastleGateshead Initiative (NGI), was created to promote both Newcastle and its neighbouring town opposite on the River Tyne: Gateshead.

NGI is a destination and inward investment agency that delivers for Newcastle, Gateshead, and the wider region. It champions the destination on a regional, national, and international stage to attract jobs, visitors, and investment. Commercial income from private-sector partners accounts for 30% of NGI’s income, with the remaining 70% from public sector funding bids and contracts. NGI’s senior leadership team is composed of a chief executive and four directors and governed by a board of six.

As a social enterprise, every single one of NGI’s projects is dedicated to making a lasting social and economic impact. As drivers and enablers of economic growth, NGI maximises impact through partnerships. NGI convenes the public sector, university leaders, and private-sector companies to discuss the strategy and the objectives set to maximise the city’s potential, improving its offer to visitors, businesses, and investors.

As a public-private partnership, NGI is supported by the North of Tyne Combined Authority, Gateshead Council, and Newcastle City Council and involves approximately 130 private-sector partner organisations, who work alongside NGI on key projects to drive innovation, act on pressing challenges, unlock opportunity, and contribute to the growth of an inclusive economy.

NGI works collaboratively with Newcastle City Council, Gateshead Council, North of Tyne Combined Authority, private-sector partners, and other stakeholders to create a better place to live. It engages with stakeholders and policy makers to influence on a national and regional level to benefit the people who live and work there.

NGI operates a series of sub-brands, including Invest Newcastle, the NewcastleGateshead Convention Bureau, and Destination North East England.

NGI promotes the distinctiveness of the region, its culture, and its people to create an authentic voice that makes Newcastle, Gateshead, and the wider region stand out from the crowd. It works across key growth sectors and uses insight and intelligence to drive innovation, inward investment, and business growth. In addition, it attracts world-class conferences that reinforce sector strengths using business events as a key part of its proactive inward investment strategy.

NGI, through its award-winning inward investment agency, Invest Newcastle, promotes the city on a national and international stage. Since 2013, it has supported the creation or safeguarding of 14,500 jobs, with the northeast topping the national list for job creation from FDI projects in 2022. Invest Newcastle connects businesses to people, supporting businesses throughout their investment journey and beyond, providing free and impartial advice to make sure their businesses thrive.

NGI's Convention Bureau offers free and unbiased advice to event organisers and develop bids to bring major business events and conferences to Newcastle and Gateshead. The Convention Bureau won Best Innovation Award and Bronze for the Best UK Convention Bureau at the M&IT Awards 2022. It has also been shortlisted for Best UK Convention Bureau in September 2023.

The NGI destination team provides insight and direction for the development of the local tourism industry and promotes and positions Newcastle-Gateshead as a vibrant destination through targeted campaigns nationally and internationally which help to attract leisure and business visitors and new investment to the area.

In 2022, NGI received pilot funding from national government to be the first national regional visitor economy programme called the North East Destination Development Programme (DDP), which NGI operates under the Destination North East England Brand. It was also the first organisation recognised by Visit England as an official destination management organisation called a Local Visitor Economy Partnership.

As the first ever DDP pilot, NGI has ambitions to double the size of the visitor economy in ten years, unlocking the opportunity across seven local authorities in the northeast of England.

Box written in collaboration with Sarah Green, chief executive of NGI.
More information: www.ngi.org.uk/.

The “price” instrument is less mobilised in place promotion: as mentioned, there is no direct financial exchange between a region and tourists or companies. On the other hand, taxation can be used as an instrument to attract new residents and companies. By offering special status to wealthy individuals or families who come to settle or by granting tax advantages to companies that meet certain conditions

(minimum investment, number of jobs created, etc.), a place can use this instrument predominantly for its development. However, there are two risks. First, attractive tax policies are easily copied and may not constitute a sustainable competitive advantage. Second, these policies are largely dependent on elected authorities and on potential sudden changes that could cause an exodus of people and/or companies that came to settle mainly for this reason.

Finally, the last group of instruments is made up of products and services specifically aimed at residents, tourists, and businesses. Among these are seasonal activities for residents, offers for tourists (museum and transport packages valid for 1–3 days), events organised for residents or tourists (for example, to liven up certain periods of the year), or offers and events for businesses to facilitate networking and help them establish themselves. There is no clear limit to the development of instruments; the list and examples presented here are far from exhaustive. In addition to rules for the combination of instruments and their use, inventiveness and originality in the development of marketing tools can also be a decisive advantage in terms of attractiveness.

While much has been written about the development of places, with a focus on specific target groups, excessive numbers of tourists have led to reflections on limiting overtourism with a demarketing approach. In such a situation, marketing tools should be used not to promote offerings but specifically to restrict them (Shiu et al., 2009):

- **Products:** this will involve limiting access for outsiders to certain services, for example, by restricting the possibility of renting a flat in the city centre, prioritising certain services such as access to museums for residents on specific days, or obliging outsiders to book a particular arrival time, and so on.
- **Price:** there will be a set of negative incentives, such as a tax to be paid if there is no overnight stay, a fee for using a basic infrastructure (as highlighted in Box 3.2, the village of Iseltwald charges CHF 5 for taking a selfie from a pontoon), and so on. Another example is Bhutan, which charges a sustainable-development fee of \$200 per person per day.
- **Accessibility:** accessibility is made difficult by forcing outsiders to leave their vehicles in distant car parks by imposing the use of public transport, and so on. In Venice, the banning of cruise ships was aimed at reducing the number of tourists flowing into the historical city centre.
- **Promotion:** reduction of advertising campaigns, extension of promotion to a wider area to better distribute tourists, and so on. Other strategies to demarket places include the absence of marketing measures and informational place demarketing (which may discourage people from coming or at least encourage them to behave in a responsible manner).

Notes

1 www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/infant_mortality_rates/infant_mortality.htm.

2 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/646715/public_health_england_marketing_strategy_2017_to_2020.pdf.

- 3 www.health.belgium.be/sites/default/files/uploads/fields/fpshealth_theme_file/20221010_shc-9527_marketing_of_unhealthy_foods_to_children_vweb.pdf.
- 4 www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/12/28/uae-firms-scramble-to-hire-locals-for-jobs-as-deadline-approaches.
- 5 “Soft power” can become what is sometimes called “sharp power” when it is used by authoritarian states to project their influence internationally. It includes the use of manipulative actions to undermine the political system of a target country.
- 6 www.touteleurope.eu/societe/infographie-les-capitales-europeennes-de-la-culture/.
- 7 www.expo2025.or.jp/en/.

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Part III

Critical perspectives on place branding and marketing

The key aspects presented in Part II, as well as the conceptual and theoretical bases provided in Part I, should not obscure the fact that critical perspectives on certain concepts used in this book are always needed. Indeed, critiques help deepen our understanding of our field of research and open avenues for future studies. Some authors have called for a reflection about the way place branding and marketing impacts organisations and people, especially residents. For example, Eisenschitz (2021) recalls that while place branding promises to renew poorly performing cities, it does not automatically translate into a prosperous future for the area's residents and workers. This has been exemplified by the resentment expressed by residents in the case of overtourism (see Box 3.2). This should be taken into account by academics and practitioners, since superficial marketing and branding campaigns may attract tourists yet alienate the locals at the same time.

Other critical perspectives have emphasised the exclusion of aspects related to economics, urban planning and governance, or public diplomacy. More generally, certain contributions have regretted the insufficiently multidisciplinary character of place-branding and -marketing research. The political component of place attractiveness and promotion has also often been overlooked, especially in studies that focus too narrowly on branding and/or marketing. In this regard, Kavaratzis et al. (2015) highlight the need to prefer a comprehensive point of view on place branding and marketing, especially by linking key issues and responding to key questions such as the importance, origin, and management of place brands. Several authors have also recently called for a broadening of our perspectives, which focus almost exclusively on a few Western democracies. Roberts (2021, p. 65) argues, for instance, that

in the late twentieth century, many people drew a division between countries of the West, which were considered to be “stable” and “consolidated”, and countries outside the West, which were “fragile” and “developing” or “emerging”. This dichotomy is breaking down in the twenty-first century. All states face the common reality of turbulence and change. They must continually adjust strategy and state capacities in response to shocks and strains.

In this sense, we want to pay attention to non-Western cases, which are included in this part of the book.

As mentioned, there are numerous critiques raised regarding the use of the place-branding and -marketing concepts. In this part of the book, guest authors will focus on three specific types of critiques. The first points to the diverging meanings of place brands, which have often gone unexplored. In Chapter 9, Pasquinelli investigates the dynamics of counter-branding and reactive brand building, especially in times of crisis. She emphasises the fact that place branding, when understood as a strategic process, should always start with a clear focus on the place's main attributes and goals and include reflections about the diverging, plural meanings associated with a place brand. Of course, when they pass up the chance to take a unique uniform name, logo, and/or slogan, places run the risk of losing market attractiveness for potential tourists and investors. However, they will certainly improve their connections to residents and reinforce the locals' attachment to the place where they live. A second critical standpoint relates to sporadic and temporary advertisement campaigns, sometimes poorly targeted and not evaluated; the wasting of money on costly logos and slogans, without any strategy and substance; and the mimicry that characterises many place-branding processes. This last element points to a paradoxical situation: while places compete and seek to differentiate themselves, they often apply the same marketing measures, with similar, almost standardised brand strategies. More generally, the main approaches to "good" place branding are discussed in Chapter 10, written by Sullivan, Bertilsson, and Rennstam.

Finally, a third critique addressed in this part regards the absence of non-Western cases in the literature. Chapter 11, written by Zhang and Kavaratzis, presents the place-branding efforts deployed in Chongqing, China. They show that a different approach applies in the Chinese context, since the government plays a central role. Other distinctive aspects of this approach include the top-down impact of the political ideology on the positioning of the brand and the slogan, from the national level to the regional level; the importance of the media-controlled stories and the influence exerted by the Chinese Communist Party's propaganda department, which takes responsibility for brand communication; and the general political influence on both the administration and the governance of Chinese place-branding processes. In addition, the current focus on a small number of Western democracies has not allowed for the exploration of place branding in other less economically developed areas. In Chapter 12, Kakpovi presents the case of Benin, a West African country. This chapter explains that in developing countries, limited resources may lead countries to focus on branding efforts (1) at the national level, (2) as a means to foster economic development, and (3) influenced by non-Western cases (in Benin, Saudi Arabia's strategic programme Vision 2030). The country's development of an enhanced tourism offer relies on a global strategy that resembles a nation-branding effort: "Revealing Benin" to the world and raising awareness of the unique cultural scene and heritage it has to offer.

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9 Governing place-brand meanings: pitfalls in search of congruity

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9.1 Introduction

The place-branding literature has acknowledged the emergence of multiple diverging place-brand meanings. Emerging and especially diverging meanings (i.e., diverging from the official place-brand identity) are often analysed as a failure of official branding processes or as a negative externality to be managed and addressed by brand managers working in the organisations in charge of building and maintaining the place brand (e.g., economic-development organisations, destination-management organisations, local, regional, and national authorities). Top-down branding, brand politicking (i.e., pursuing progressive alignment to the official brand), and brand co-creation frameworks have yet to deal with diverging brand meanings. This chapter argues that diverging place-brand meanings are an integral component of the place brand, playing the crucial function of keeping it alive and adaptive in transitioning communities. These communities attempt to develop their adaptability and transformation capacity in the face of environmental and societal challenges (Collier et al., 2013), boosting a shift towards more sustainable modalities of consumption and production (Khmara and Kronenberg, 2020). The practice of place-brand management needs to assist resilience and sustainable development by supporting change and the capacity to adapt conceptions and perceptions of the place, moving away from outdated stereotypes and common-sensical or crystallised place images. This chapter discusses the conceptual and managerial challenges of diverging place-brand meanings. Through a critical analysis of the existing place-branding literature, it casts light on the pitfalls encountered in searching for brand congruity and opens routes for further research.

9.2 Place-brand formation

Many contributions within the place-branding literature have focused on place-brand formation and management. Place brands have been mostly defined as projected mental representations of places in minds of people (Zenker and Rutter, 2014) such as tourists, entrepreneurs, workers, investors, residents, and policy-makers. The formation of place-brand meanings has been under scrutiny, as well as their relationship with place users' satisfaction, attachment (Insch and Florek,

2008; Zenker and Rutter, 2014), and attitude (Parker et al., 2015). The process of brand formation has been understood from three main perspectives:

- *Top-down place-brand strategy making*: positioning the place brand through a selection of tangible and intangible attributes and values composing the brand identity centralised in the hands of decision makers. This deliberate process is based on selecting and communicating some values and attributes, with the likely consequent exclusion of some stakeholders—and the attributes and values representing them—from the place representation produced (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). Branding implies forms of manipulation of meanings (Govers and Go, 2009), likely to create brand alienation (Jensen, 2007a), conflicts, and negative reactions among those local stakeholders who feel excluded by the place representation. Concerning brand-identity formation, scholars have argued that place branding might result in elitist and conflictual dynamics (Ward, 2000; Jensen, 2007b; Greenberg, 2008).
- *Place-brand politicking* (Ooi, 2004): this acknowledges the limitations of top-down brand building, authoritatively imposing the place brand. Although place-branding scholars have generally paid limited attention to the political, institutional, and contextual factors surrounding place promotion and branding (Vuignier, 2017), brand politicking highlights the need to persuade local stakeholders about the place brand and involve them during the brand construction, promotion, maintenance, and implementation phases. Consensus building and minimisation of different brand interpretations (Zhang and Zhao, 2009) are at the core of this place-branding practice. Place-brand politicking introduces a degree of negotiation of brand meanings, adjusting the place brand throughout the interactions with the stakeholders but maintaining a central decision maker, thereby establishing the place-brand identity. Negotiation is the process of mobilising support and cooperation around the place brand by shaping and sharing a unique and appealing story about the place. Politicking can be understood as a mix of adjusting the place-brand identity to local stakeholders in the phase of brand-identity design and attempting to push stakeholders' alignment with the place brand in the implementation of the brand strategy.
- *Brand co-creation*: this perspective builds on a stakeholder-based view of place brands. This place-brand formation process draws attention to open, social, collective, and multidirectional meaning creation in constant change (Kavaratzis and Kalandides, 2015; Vuignier, 2015). In this regard, the ATLAS (Ask, Think, Listen, Act, and Speak) model proposed by Kavaratzis and Hatch (2021) has framed co-creative mechanisms. This conceptual development is important, since stakeholder participation is becoming increasingly pivotal in place branding (Klijn et al., 2012; Eshuis et al., 2014). However, the concrete mechanisms determining engagement and continuous involvement remain open to further scrutiny. Besides stakeholder involvement (whose scope would deserve additional discussion), the facilitation process is at the core of brand management, to orchestrate dispersive mechanisms of the creation of meaning by multi-stakeholders. The critical point identified by the ATLAS model relates to the

importance of having mechanisms that ensure the constant consideration of emerging meanings. Accordingly, facilitation is vital, since boosting meaning-making requires steering effective participation, consultation, and negotiation among stakeholders. Brand leadership is central to the ATLAS model because of the need to orchestrate the participation process and make it “happen organically but . . . also undertaken consciously” (p. 10). At the same time, the brand derived should be “resistant to [the] control of brand managers” (p. 13). Still, it is evident that the border between leading and controlling meaning-making may be highly fuzzy in practice. This critical aspect of the brand co-creation practice is well known in product and corporate branding, where the need to convey the co-created value of a product in the brand, without meaning dispersion, is essential.

Across these three conceptualisations modelling place-brand formation, we can identify two dimensions: the *direction of brand-meanings flow*, which are the inputs of place-brand formation (monodirectional, bidirectional, or pluri-directional) and the *number and diversity* of stakeholders involved as protagonists of the elicitation of brand meanings (Figure 9.1).

Beyond these different place-branding logics, the three models presented in Figure 9.1 are anchored to the presence of a central actor that legitimately steers the process, makes the process converge towards a brand-value proposition without “value dispersion”, and is in charge of keeping the process ongoing and fruitful. There is a “brand project owner” who is the key and only decision-maker in top-down strategy making while also becoming a facilitator in charge of orchestrating the brand co-creation process. An example of top-down strategy making is provided by the emergence of the NewcastleGateshead brand (see also Box 8.2), an inter-municipal brand signalling the culture-led regeneration process in the northeast of England since the 1990s, throughout the bid for the European Capital of Culture

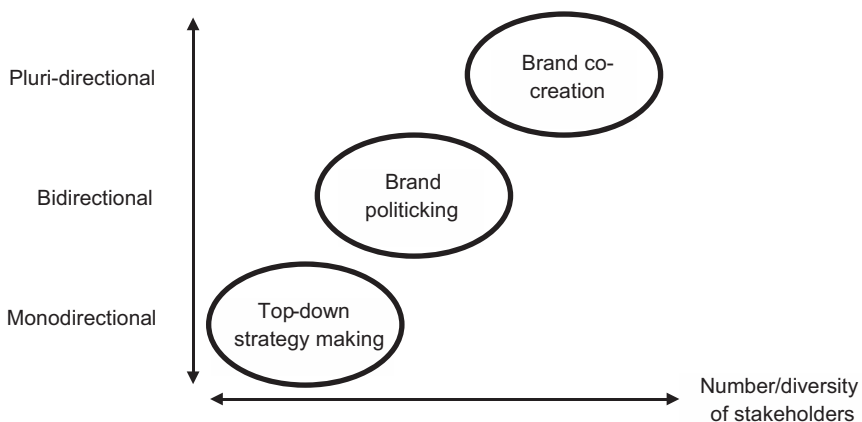


Figure 9.1 Place-brand formation models

and its legacy. Gateshead Council was the initiator and, together with Newcastle Council, firmly headed the process. A radical re-envisioning of local development and the design of an inter-municipal partnership as “branded relational space” were defined by the decision makers, crystallising and institutionalising the place brand. Despite its resilience, the brand boosted no sense of affective bonding and emotional attachment in the local community (Pasquinelli, 2014).

Top-down approaches persist despite the consultative mechanisms that may be put in place by brand leaders, as discussed by Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2007). Focusing on the case of Amsterdam, they highlighted that the process of interviewing key stakeholders, followed by the centralised identification of key branding themes and the subsequent involvement of the local community for selecting priority themes among those identified, did not guarantee bottom-up brand building.

Orchestrated place-brand co-creation efforts have been discussed in the literature, despite a limited focus on the practice of place-brand co-creation. In Pori, Finland, a long-term co-creative process was undertaken to reframe the city brand by engaging residents in workshops, online participation, and brand labs, facilitating the elicitation of Pori brand meanings by making residents share their place experience (Hakala et al., 2020). According to the authors’ findings, an ongoing dialogue and sense of ownership were the results.

Co-creative efforts are often combined with top-down branding, as in the case of Luton, UK, where the Council’s campaign delivered storytelling aimed to steer place-brand co-creation (Stoica et al., 2021). However, disputes, disapproval, and negative brand meanings emerged, witnessing the very real challenges of steering and facilitating co-creation practice.

In both top-down branding and brand co-creation, the brand project owner works towards forming an official place brand. The official place brand, although it may change, adapt, and integrate novel inputs and diverse viewpoints expressed by the multiple stakeholders involved and interacting over time (e.g., brand co-creation), is the result of a designed place-brand-building process.

In this vein, emerging brand meanings that, for whatever reason, are not processed in time to become part of the official brand are conceived as an externality of the process, a failure, and an issue to be addressed. Further participation, involvement, and more agile place-branding procedures may respond to this issue, but conceptually emerging and, especially, diverging brand meanings remain outside the place-branding framework.

The place-branding literature does not yet frame potential meaning divergences, limiting the focus to a portion of the place-brand formation, which means those mechanisms that pertain to the official place-brand formation. This is due to conceiving place branding as a policy for identifying solutions to identified problems and for then implementing these solutions in a given—preferably short—time (as often stated in the place-branding debate, within the time of the political mandate of the elected government). In this frame, the place brand is the sublimation of the policy essence, projecting the image of how the place must (is committed to) be. Consequently, divergence is a problem, since it is the manifestation of tensions, contradictions, and dissent. One of the most important points we can derive from much

literature discussing place-branding failures concerns the importance (and inevitability) of working with tensions, contradictions, and dissent to concretely assist cities' and regions' transitions towards more sustainable and more equitable development.

In fact, place-branding processes are often accompanied by emerging brand meanings, which may diverge, hack, and hijack the official place brand, even though the process is based on the most advanced brand co-creation mechanisms. Exogenous place-branding forces (Pasquinelli, 2017) add to the endogenous ones (official branding) and play a significant role in place-brand image and reputation building. Certain stakeholders may feel excluded from official place-brand formation, but some may also be unwilling and uninterested in being involved or even take the opportunity to create dissonant brand meanings deliberately. These exogenous forces should not be minimised but should be considered central gears of place-brand formation.

9.3 Congruity theory perspective applied to place-brand formation

A latent (not openly discussed) dominance of congruity theory shapes the place-branding debate. Congruity theory, which emerged from psychology studies, states that individuals develop a positive attitude towards an object that is consistent with what they hold in mind about it (Osgood and Tannenbaum, 1955). In contrast, incongruent information triggers an attitude change. In order to boost a positive attitude, perceptions of an object must be consistent with the individual's consolidated beliefs and schemata. This theoretical framework was recently introduced as applying to place brands, their online presence (Styvén et al., 2020), and place-brand identity (Casidy et al., 2019). It has also been widely discussed in contributions focused on consumer marketing, branding, and advertising (e.g., Aaker and Keller, 1990; Salciuviene et al., 2010).

Congruity theory casts light on conformity and stickiness to "expectations about a brand, based on consumers' previous beliefs, schemata, and knowledge of the brand" (Meyers-Levy and Tybout, 1989, cited in Styvén et al., 2020, p. 542). Incongruent messages create cognitive dissonance and, consequently, psychological discomfort that individuals do not accept (Lee and Jeong, 2014), cognitively minimising perceived inconsistencies (Ul Islam et al., 2018). Through a "reverse causality" mechanism, individuals tend to cognitively adjust and compensate for dissonant and dissimilar information they receive or adopt a resistant attitude (Casidy et al., 2019).

Place-branding literature has adopted the principle of congruity as an implicit assumption, framing the official place brand as the focal point of observation and outcome, understood as a benchmark for congruity. Diverging and dissonant meanings have been reduced to externalities and interpreted as failures that the place-branding process can face by improving procedural/technical and governance/organisational aspects. Congruity theory can assist in explaining place-brand targets' reaction when faced with dissonant brand meanings and stakeholders' reaction faced with emerging brand meanings that do not fit those socialised through individual and collective branding efforts.

For instance, destination branding has long been based on a purely market-oriented approach, where functional and affective brand components were identified and studied to analyse and steer travellers' propensity to visit and purchase tourism products offered by a place. In this case, the importance of congruity in conveying the brand value proposition across markets and channels is evident (Lee and Jeong, 2014): branding means "the coordinated use of marketing tools . . . for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging [place] offerings" (Braun, 2008, cited in Zenker et al., 2017, p. 16). Incongruous brand meanings may cause the destination image to fade, confusing customers until the destination loses its position within their consideration set. The progressive integration of destination branding with place branding (Ashworth and Kavaratzis, 2010; Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2021) is, however, undermining the congruity assumption in favour of the emerging need to rapidly shift towards a stakeholder-oriented approach to destination marketing and management.

The literature has observed place-branding practices that challenge the principle of congruity by introducing disruptive brand meanings as part of the official branding. Path-breaking branding may even create a more substantial need to reduce further divergence in order to prevent negative attitudes, confusion, and distrust:

- *Rebranding*: designing a place brand that signals the transformation of the place through urban-development and regeneration projects. Examples are culture-led regeneration processes that, since the 1990s, have been accompanied by branding campaigns willing to firmly communicate the pursued change (Plaza, 2006; Jensen, 2007b; Pasquinelli, 2014; Heidenreich, 2015). In this case, there has been a need to consistently deliver a message of change, expressing a "self-fulfilling prophecy" (Bellini, 2004) to renew the local sense of pride and create a legacy with the place's new deal. Several critical points regarding such processes have been discussed in the literature, since they carry the risk of a limited or impoverishing impact on the place's soft infrastructure (Bellini and Pasquinelli, 2016a).
- *Network branding*: the construction of inter-municipal brands built to encompass a critical mass of assets framing a "unique and meaningful product" (Hankinson, 2001, p. 129), which does not coincide with administrative borders. Acknowledging the interrelatedness between places (Kalandides, 2007), network branding creates one official umbrella brand for two or more municipalities (or regions), pursuing market-related goals (e.g., efficiency and/or effectiveness) and/or a political vision (Pasquinelli, 2013). The need to steer a sense of legacy for the designed network brand justifies the need for congruity, allowing the newborn brand to take root in people's minds, although there is a risk of rejection and negative reactions against it.

Even in cases where congruity is challenged by the goals of the branding strategy (i.e., rebranding and network branding), the need for congruity is a strong assumption in the place-branding process.

9.4 Reframing divergence in place branding

Emerging place-brand meanings are here defined as not conveyed by official branding, neither injected and processed in the branding process nor co-created through it. Emerging meanings may result in diverging meanings that are unaligned, dissonant, and distant from the official brand. As previously discussed, these may reveal tensions, contradictions, and dissent in a community experiencing the place.

Diverging place-brand meanings can be considered a subset of emerging meanings that especially challenge congruity, projecting incongruent messages about the place compared with the official place brand. Incongruity lies in the mismatch between emerging brand meanings and expected brand meanings based on the beliefs, schemata, and brand knowledge of official brand projects.

The following sub-sections introduce and discuss three streams of place-branding inquiry that highlight the pitfalls related to the assumption of congruity in place branding. These streams are significantly overlooked in the literature.

Counter-branding

Counter-branding is the marketing translation of so-called “culture jamming”, a counter-hegemonic practice that originated in social-movement contexts for the purpose of challenging dominating cultural models and, in the marketing fields, capitalist economies and corporate brand culture (Cammaerts, 2007). It manifests as a narrative design built to counteract the targeted brand by appropriating symbols, visuals, and values and reversing their meaning (Greenberg, 2008). One famous example is the renowned “I amsterdam” brand, which opened the way to a residents’ movement mobilising the “I amsterdamned” counter-message about the city’s development.

The counter-branding phenomenon was studied in New York as an oppositional tactic to neo-liberal urban policies (Greenberg, 2008). Counter-branding involves the strategising of reaction to official branding and differs from brand resistance (Jensen, 2007a), which is a form of uncoordinated dissent. It earns vitality from the strength of the official branding campaign, as its visibility and circulation are proportional to the visibility of the official brand. Paradoxically, official branding provides an opportunity for resonance and a sense of direction, helping dissent to emerge (Pasotti, 2013). It casts light on issues related to the congruity principle, as it suggests that “place marketers may erroneously believe that the place brand is controllable and fully manageable” (Medway et al., 2015, p. 66). Accordingly, the key point is that searching for congruity over the inevitably plural representations of places (Maiello and Pasquinelli, 2015) is not wrong but simply impossible.

A special session of the American Marketing Association’s Summer Marketing Educators entitled “Place Branding: Are We Wasting Our Time?” in 2014 warned of the need to think of counter-branding forces and their meaning for place-brand architecture, stressing the need to understand place branding beyond “coordination, alignment, and strategic consistency” (Medway et al., 2015, p. 66). Since then, counter-branding—and, more generally, the exogenous forces of place branding that cannot be harnessed in branding processes (not even through open, co-creative,

and widely participative processes)—has not been significantly explored and conceptualised in the place-branding literature.

Analysis of the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup events in Rio de Janeiro provided an opportunity to shed light on the relationship between the official and non-official branding mechanisms (Maiello and Pasquinelli, 2015). The Brazilian government saw sports mega-events as a master narrative to globally communicate about the rapidly transforming hosting cities (Zhang and Zhao, 2009), meant to give visibility to the emerging economy's growth path. In contrast, NGOs, activists, social movements, neighbourhood associations, political parties, entrepreneurs, and intellectuals mobilised against both the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. Public investments in sports infrastructure clashed with the protests demanding housing rights and investment in public services such as education, healthcare, and public transport. Symbols and stories of “red zones”, displacement, and eviction started circulating globally, quickly, and effectively through images on social media of mobilisation and protests in Brazilian cities. The official brand and counter-brand provided two opposite representations of the Olympic City leveraging the same thematic areas, such as the urban space, the physical transformations, economic development, and cultural heritage in different and opposite ways. A dialectic relationship between the official brand and counter-brand emerged, which deserves further attention for its potential to cast light on place-brand formation and congruity. Although opposed, the two brands interacted and fed off each other. The official brand (planned, top-down hosting-city brand) adopted themes and symbols from the counter-brand narrative (spontaneous and community-built representation of the hosting city).

Stakeholder brands nurturing the place brand

A consolidated definition of place brand states that it is

a network of associations in the consumers' mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design.

(Zenker et al., 2017, p. 17)

Such a network of associations corresponds to a network of stakeholders connected to the place (geographical or symbolic connections) which, through their actions, create and project place meanings. Consequently, the place brand is not only the result of intentional place-branding policies but can be interpreted as a network of stakeholder brands such as commercial (e.g., company and product brands, retail brands) and non-commercial brands (e.g., cultural institutions, education institutions; Bellini and Pasquinelli, 2016b). Outside the institutionalised circuits of city-brand building, there is a web of stakeholders that create city images and meanings by producing, consuming, and circulating them (Pasquinelli, 2015).

So far, few studies have addressed the role of companies in place-brand formation. Some efforts have revolved around the contribution of fashion brands (Jansson and Power, 2010; Pike, 2015; Bellini and Pasquinelli, 2016b; Pasquinelli et al., 2023) and luxury-fashion retailers (Arrigo, 2009). Companies appropriating a place brand to shape their value propositions recodify the symbolic knowledge embedded in the place brand, thus creating novel place meanings and images (Pasquinelli et al., 2023). Firms can also be “engaged translators” of the smart-city brand script, translating the global smart-city master brand into a locally adapted city brand (Pasquinelli, 2015). This was shown through the analysis of an ICT company (Centrica) based in Florence, Italy, which contributed to creating innovative city images by circulating place-based smart-city images of Florence globally. The company produces and commercialises ultra-high-resolution digital imaging, interactive visual communication, and knowledge-management solutions, with a focus on cultural heritage, tourism, fashion, luxury goods, and anticounterfeiting. The internationalisation of the Centrica brand circulated images of the city brand (the city of arts and culture) intertwined with the local high-tech brand.

Acknowledging the multi-headed process of place-brand formation highlights the limited opportunity for congruity, with the realistic possibility of diverging place-brand meanings emerging in the network of stakeholder brands (divergence not only between the stakeholder-brand network and the official place-branding process but also across the different brand meanings created and projected by the various stakeholders). Some stakeholder-led place-brand meanings can be so strongly perceived locally and internationally as to hijack the place brand. Conflicts, exclusion effects, and contestations may also ensue from these mechanisms, similar to what has been widely discussed concerning government-led place branding (Pasquinelli et al., 2023). That is, tensions may emerge from companies’ place-brand appropriation and the derived brand meanings, which local stakeholders may perceive as an exploitative mechanism hijacking the place image for the pursuit of profit. Individual stakeholders’ place-brand appropriation might erode the place-brand potential, hampering this intangible asset and its future evolution. Future aspects should cast light on the implications of stakeholders’ place brand-appropriation and the consequent place-brand formation dynamics.

Reactive brand building in a time of crisis: the “unplanned” brand

Another challenge to the principle of congruity in place branding may emerge from official communications from places in times of crisis and disasters. There is a lack of research on the role of place branding in a crisis, and awareness of this lack has consolidated in the post-pandemic period (Zenker and Kock, 2020). However, a recent study analysed the social-media communications of four urban destinations in Italy (Venice, Rome, Florence, and Milan) and found variations of brand values and attributes compared to the pre-pandemic brand, highlighting functional and emotional adaptation and transformative rebranding (Pasquinelli et al., 2022). Some place-brand experimentation took place during the pandemic with signals of a “process of reimagination of future urban-tourism scenarios”, the introduction of

new urban spaces in the tourism scene with new actors, and an emphasis on sustainable tourism (Pasquinelli et al., 2022).

In some cases, dissonant place images were projected, taking a distance from the pre-COVID-19 destination brand and responding to changing post-pandemic market trends and tourists' modified preferences and behaviours (OECD, 2020). Official communications delivered innovative place images responding to sudden change and uncertainty, leaving room for alternative brand meanings about consolidated tourism destinations (Pasquinelli et al., 2022).

In this case, the official place brand breaks with congruity in a crisis context characterised by discontinuity and uncertainty (Gössling et al., 2021). Dissonant, unaligned, and diverging place-brand meanings may emerge from official communication, which may be implemented outside any strategic thinking about the brand. In a crisis, marketing and communication may drive unplanned brand building in response to sudden shocks. Future research needs to address the evolution of such emerging place-brand meanings and their potential to accompany and inform long-term redefinition of strategies and planning. Alternatively, the emerging place brand may fade, leading to no structural change in the current place-branding strategies deployed in most cities, regions, and countries.

9.5 Beyond brand congruity: open questions, conceptual and managerial challenges

This chapter has argued the need to raise scholars' and practitioners' attention to dissonant place-branding meanings. These meanings should not be understood as negative externalities of place brands. Instead, they should be framed as an intrinsic part of the place-branding process, integral to place-brand formation. Instead of searching for modalities to minimise the emergence of dissonant brand meanings, detecting and understanding the emerging brand meanings deserves more attention, boosting awareness of the plural representation of places, the stakeholders generating place representations, and their representation modalities.

Conceptually, there is a need to reach further insights into the irreducible distance and dissonance between stakeholders' place representations and emerging place-brand meanings. The stakeholder-based view of place branding can further the approach to emerging and diverging place-brand meanings as integral to place brands.

Scholars should explicitly consider the principle of congruity and challenge its uncritical adoption in place branding. Adaptations or radical re-envisioning of the concept may be needed, assuming the role and implications of plurality for places. Unlike product and corporate brands, place brands have plural ownership, as widely acknowledged in the literature, but this must be mirrored by place-brand and branding conceptualisations. A reinterpretation of the principle of congruity in place branding opens avenues for further research in conventional marketing and branding, too, with the generally increasing fuzziness of brand ownership in diverse branding domains.

Distinctions are necessary between marketing-oriented place brands (external targets) and planning-oriented place brands (internal targets), the latter overlapping

the scope of internal branding. The principle of congruity certainly applies to a destination brand or a place brand serving FDI promotion (Pasquinelli and Vuignier, 2020), while it needs deeper thinking and reinterpretation in the case of place brands accompanying urban development and planning policies.

The managerial challenges that derive from loosening the notion of congruity involve the need to find modalities to govern plurality. Governing plurality should be understood as something other than an effort to harness diverse place representations and force such plurality towards brand alignment. As stated, systematic application of the principle of congruity in place branding simply hides broad and significant parts of the place-branding process. The formation of non-official or “official yet unplanned” place-brand meanings (in line with the cases discussed in the previous sections) should be considered an indicator of a place brand’s vitality, with the redundancy of brand meanings guaranteeing the possibility for the brand to stay meaningful and evolve. Richness in brand meanings and diversity allow a place brand to undertake different trajectories of evolution and thus to accompany future development the place might need to undertake. Governing emerging brand meanings and governing plurality means finding ways to enhance the value of dissonant meanings’ coexistence without hiding or attempting to remove incongruencies and flaws in the logic of place representation.

Place branding understood as a strategic process stating what the place *is* about, including marketing leverage such as brand logos or slogans, may miss the importance of plurality beyond congruity. Alternative modes of branding should be considered, less focused on the positioning and definition of brand identity and more focused on creating modalities to talk about different current and potential positionings and identities. In this case, the pitfall is the danger of renouncing a sharp brand-value proposition, along with the risk of not being understood in various markets, especially the tourism and investment markets. At the same time, though, there is a chance to think of place branding as the process of steering creative and innovative forms of exchange and dialogue in local communities, reinforcing attachment and attitude to the place rather than to the official place brand.

This conceptual discussion leads to some hypotheses for developing the place-branding practice, which would need experimentation and testing. The first hypothesis involves listening to diverging brand meanings that emerge outside of formal facilitation processes. The available technologies, big-data mining and processing, support this practice, providing a real-time opportunity for listening and monitoring. The second involves a factual dialogue with the plurality of stakeholders spontaneously producing place-brand meanings (outside of any designed place-branding process): this would make for valuable and highly motivating projects for the actors involved. The third concerns building “light” connections between the official place brand and stakeholders producing place-brand meanings. Such “light” connections are not aimed at recomposing the puzzle of a congruous place brand but at creating meaningful links acknowledging and enhancing difference and divergence.

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10 A critical typology of “good place branding”

Lessons from place-branding expertise

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10.1 Introduction

Place branding is defined as “the development of brands for geographic locations with the aim of triggering positive associations about the area and distinguishing a place from other places” (Stevens et al., 2020, p. 752). Like all occupations, place branding is organised by discourses, or talk, that determine best practices and norms about what constitutes expertise (Loacker and Sullivan, 2016). Exploring place-branding discourses is important because it offers insights into what constitutes ideal place-branding practices and who gets to say what these practices are. This is particularly important given that place branding influences places in ways that impact citizens and other stakeholders.

Extant literature argues that branding experts are the authoritative characters and most prominent trend-setters in the place branding field (Anholt, 2008; Cleave et al., 2019; de Noronha et al., 2017; McCann and Ward, 2012). Far from simply being arbiters of logos or slogans, branding professionals are “often understood as the leading actors that influence local and national governments in (re)allocating resources and deploying specific image-related policies” (Goulart-Sztejnberg and Giovanardi, 2017, p. 425). As such, they have significant influence on the discourses of place branding and they set the stage for what constitutes good branding work (Hardy and Maguire, 2010).

Despite their importance, few studies specifically explore branding experts, what they consider desirable and legitimate branding, or the advice they give to cities (for exceptions, see Aronczyk, 2008; Bertilsson et al., 2020; Hankinson, 2010). That said, critical scholars warn that given the complexities inherent in managing places, relying on experts from outside of city governance or *general* formulas for how to work with places might be less ideal than relying on the expertise and intuitions of city managers (Anholt, 2008; Aronczyk, 2008). A general concern is that branders might focus only on selling the right image or identity of a place, in essence by focusing on redressing rather than by bringing in-depth knowledge of place governance and management (de Noronha et al., 2017).

We seek to add to studies of place branding from a critical lens by paying attention to place branding experts’ speech and interactions in a professional setting—a place-branding conference—to explore how they construct an everyday

or common-sense view of what constitutes “good” place branding. Based on our analysis of place branders’ talk to each other at a place branding conference, we develop a model of “good” place branding, consisting of four ideal types: totemic, artistic, mimetic, and platformic.

In the following, we review literature on place branding and its affinity with the tenets of corporate branding. We then detail our qualitative methodology and proceed by outlining our inductively developed typology of good place branding. Finally, we elaborate on how following these ideal types might negatively impact cities, arguing that a dogmatic use of them may lead to a homogenisation of places and a separation between cities’ empirical conditions and their branded image.

10.2 The branding of places—modelled on the corporation

Many scholars acknowledge that a corporate brand discourse has entered the public sector via place-branding practices and hence, places such as cities can be branded via a corporate-branding logic (Anholt, 2002; Hankinson, 2007; Kavaratzis, 2009; Green et al., 2016). Central ideas of corporate-branding discourse are that organisational processes should be guided by the creation, development, and protection of a brand identity, which occurs in continuous interaction with stakeholders (Urde, 1999), and that alignment between strategic vision, organisational culture, and image is crucial in order to present specific, consistent, coherent, and uniform messages to both internal and external stakeholders (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). As corporations and cities share several common characteristics, such as complexity, serving multiple stakeholders, and being mindful of social responsibility, scholars have argued that place branding can learn a lot and *gain a lot* from corporate branding theory and practice (Anholt, 2002; Kavaratzis, 2009). For instance, following corporate branding advice is heeded as crucial tool for cities to manage the challenges inherent in successfully governing a city and attracting citizens, talent, tourists, and business investments amidst accelerating competition for resources.

The place-branding logic, influenced by corporate-branding norms, relies on place-branding experts and therefore puts forth relatively homogenous advice for how those branders should do their work. Best practices include ideals that “everything an organisation says or does communicates messages” (Kavaratzis, 2009, p. 28). This central brand ideology influences place branding in several ways, including ideals that places must be treated as a whole to achieve message consistency (Hankinson, 2007), that all communication must be governed by a brand logic that insists on uniform delivery to all stakeholders (Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Hulberg, 2006), and that stories must be located in the infrastructure of cities (Kavaratzis, 2009). Place-branding tactics mirror those found in corporate branding, such as launching communication campaigns with commercials and videos promoting an attractive city image (e.g., Kaneva, 2018); arranging high-profile events to put the city on the map or amplify its image (Richards, 2017); and enrolling in contests for “best-city” awards, such as recognition as a “green city” (Gustavsson and Elander, 2012). Reading between the lines, it seems that a corporate-brand logic brokers an optimism that the right practices will lead to positive outcomes (Loacker and Sullivan, 2016).

Although the lion’s share of literature forwards the more upbeat sides of corporate branding for cities, this advice is not without critique. Some scholars seek a middle ground, where corporate-branding practices are used but adapted for the public sector and to fit the specific condition of cities (Kavaratzis, 2009). This includes better understanding of communities (Goulart-Sztejnberg and Giovanardi, 2017) and the adoption of more inclusive, participatory, bottom-up approaches to the branding process (Kavaratzis et al., 2018).

Others question the efficacy of relying on brand experts rather than public managers. Here, questions emerge as to how a corporate branding philosophy impacts appropriate policymaking (Anholt, 2008; Aronczyk, 2008; Cleave et al., 2019). Concerns include that branders lack in-depth knowledge of governance and thus tend to focus on the image or identity of a place, amounting to “redressing” rather than a guide for comprehensive place development (de Noronha et al., 2017). Another concern is that place branding that is spearheaded by brand experts is likely to be divorced from a place’s holistic strategy, physical attributes, and knowledge and concern for multiple stakeholders’ needs and wants that would enable comprehensive, ethical, and purposeful decision-making (Anholt, 2008; Cleave et al., 2019). Instead, branding is criticised as “superficial” (Carroll and Nelson, 2017), “simple” (Cleave et al., 2019), overly “prescriptive” (Vuignier, 2017), and best limited to aspects of logo design or city slogans rather than as a strategic or holistic tool. Finally, Aronczyk (2008) demonstrates a concern for governance itself by noting that while “branding pays lip service to public participation and diversity of opinions, its reliance on a ‘core idea’ to represent a national population comes at the cost of recognising internal differentiation, resistance, or conflict” (p. 55). She argues that this is actually the point of branding, which ultimately serves to erase that which compromises the legitimacy or positive image of a place.

While extant literature provides us with insight on the popularity and prevalence of inserting a corporate branding discourse in place branding, it does not shed adequate light on the make-up of branding discourses for place branding, including what are considered best practices. This chapter provides a typology based on observations at a place branding conference and provides rich descriptions of what place branding experts consider good branding.

10.3 Methodology

To gain insight into the organising discourses that place branding experts put forth as constituting “good branding”, we explored how these experts talk and interact in their natural habitat, specifically by observing the 2019 Nordic Place Branding Conference (Future Place Leadership, 2018).² This approach is inspired by research traditions such as ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism, which tend to favour naturally occurring talk over interviews (Silverman, 1993). It is particularly relevant for studying the work of those who influence policy and work in public organisations, such as branders. For instance, McCann and Ward (2012), urban policy scholars, advise researchers to attend the places where branders learn and share information, stating “it is incumbent on researchers to be there . . . to gain a

detailed appreciation of the practices through which policy actors draw on circuits of knowledge as they cobble together their policies and cities” (p. 49). Observing the conference, we were inspired by another methodological principle, that is, to pay attention to how the participants construct their practice, including the norms and values that underpin it (Rosen, 1991). In our specific case, this regards how the place branders (1) construct place-branding expertise and (2) how they consequently construct place branding as a typology that other place branders can follow.

Data collection

Data collection took place at the 2019 Nordic Place Branding Conference in a European capital at a conference centre in a trendy neighbourhood. This event is designed mainly for place branders to provide actionable lessons from the best practices of other places that have achieved success. It featured 23 speakers with expertise in place branding from across Europe and over 200 attendees. Two authors attended the day-long event. The empirical material collected comprises about 60 pages of transcribed field notes from the conference observation and documents in the form of PowerPoint slideshows (including both texts, pictures, and movie clips) from all 23 presentations.

Data analysis

In line with grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), we worked inductively and started with an open reading of the notes, searching for overarching themes of how the participants presented good branding. Through our repetitive and systematic reading of the empirical material, we paid particular attention to how the talk and interactions expressed norms and values about what constitutes good place-branding expertise. Our interpretation that practices were constituted as (at least) “good” rests on our observation of how the presentations were received: there was no criticism and no questioning after the presentations but rather encouragement, intense applause, and curious questions about how the branders had gone about their work. We identified two underlying dimensions of place branding, and based on these we were then able to group the presentations into four ideal types (Weber, 1922) of good place branding (Figure 10.1). Since many examples could fit into a category, we employed “illustrative reduction” (Rennstam and Wästerfors, 2018, p. 116), selecting a representative example from each ideal type to describe an identified phenomenon as clearly as possible.

10.4 Typology of good place branding: four ideal types

Our empirically grounded model of types of good place branding is organised according to two underlying dimensions, each constituting a tension-continuum with two opposite poles. These two dimensions, material-symbolic and unique-isomorphic, afford the grouping of four ideal types, in the Weberian sense, of “good” place branding expertise: mimetic, artistic, totemic, and platformic.

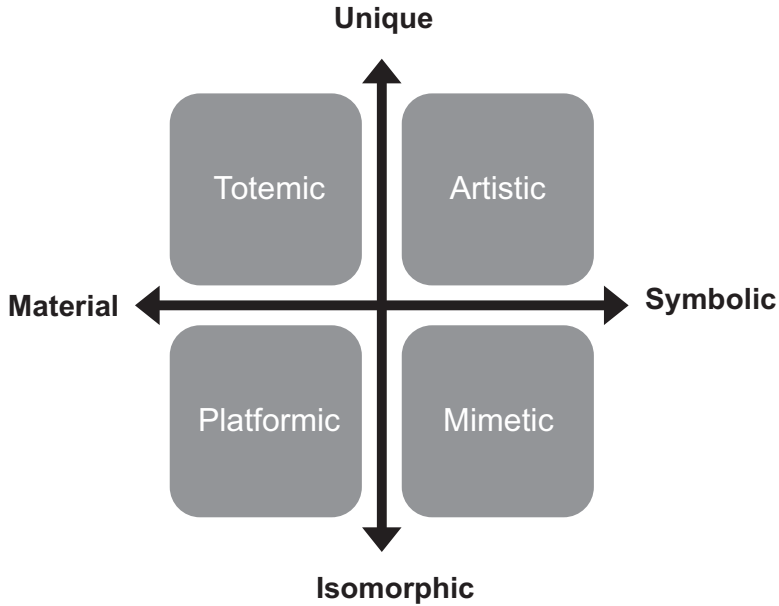


Figure 10.1 Typology of good place branding

Mimetic place branding

Mimetic place branding shows a high degree of both isomorphism and symbolism. The former implies that place branding professionals mainly produce what everybody else produces, while the latter implies that the content of the initiative is abstract and difficult to connect to any concrete element in the place. This, we argue, makes the branding practice separate from the place to be branded. Our illustration of mimetic branding practices is a presentation given by Tom and Michael, one representing a Nordic city, and the other representing the nation in which the city is situated. They work together to brand the Nordic city, which we here refer to as “The Metropolis”.

Tom and Michael described how they were “free to set the image of the Metropolis the way we want”. Therefore, they produced the slogan “The Metropolis, The Open City” as an “invitation to lovers, haters and hesitators”, to communicate of one of the city’s core values: “openness”. To bring this to life for conference participants, they played a short branding film they produced for The Metropolis where a central message is that everybody is welcome, irrespective of who they are. A soft female voice speaks to viewers through the film:

I don’t know who you are. Where you came from. Who you voted for. What your family name implies. If you’re a rebel. Or a conservative. I don’t know who you love. What you just can’t stand. If you’re rich, poor, or somewhat in

between. If you're a man, a woman, or somewhat in between [shows an image of a man, woman, and baby]. I don't even know how you feel about me. If you love me, hate me, or haven't made up your mind. You're welcome anyhow. Just—as—you—are [articulating]. With your dreams, beliefs, doubts, and preconceptions. Come visit me. I'm The Metropolis. The open city.

Although Tom and Michael state that the value communicated in the branding film is “openness”, its relation to The Metropolis is not addressed. Rather, what comes through just from the film is a *generally* upbeat message including positively charged words (“welcome”, “come visit me”, “the open city”), and overall message (everybody's welcome, “just—as—you—are”).

After the film, Tom describes how they engaged in “social listening”, which investigates how people write about The Metropolis online. He shared that a commentator pointed out that Copenhagen also branded themselves as “open”. At this, Tom displays a PowerPoint slide showing his response to the commentator on social media: “Open is not our brand. It's an initiative by us and The Nation aiming to highlight the openness of The Metropolis as a travel destination, and in this spirit inviting people from around the world to come visit. There can't be too many open-minded cities, right?” The commentator responded in a positive tone, posting that both Copenhagen and The Metropolis *are* really open cities, adding “same as my hometown, Amsterdam”. Tom summarises this interaction and the idea that his city was like other cities with the comment: “So we realised we did the right thing”.

This example confirms that competent place branding should reduce complexity—distilling the complex character of an entire city down to one slogan (“the open city”) (cf. Bertilsson and Rennstam, 2018)—a key activity in branding practice (e.g., Keller and Lehmann, 2006). This excerpt shows how place-branding expertise is associated with the ability to use a vocabulary that is positively charged but lacks reference to anything unique about the place and therefore could be used to describe many cities. It is a vocabulary that largely consists of platitudes that help the place branders and audiences recognise what is normal and conventional (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1988). Further, it shows that the norm of mimetic branding practices—which includes attention to mimicking things that sound good—is reproduced in the presentation as part of what place-branding expertise is about. Yet a critical concern is that this norm may lure branders away from the nature of the object of their activity and make them indifferent to how things are there. As a result, the place-branding practice, ironically, becomes separated from the place it is meant to signify.

Artistic place branding

Artistic place branding expresses uniqueness and symbolism. The former implies that place-branding initiatives are easily distinguishable from other initiatives, entailing creative or unexpected use of subjects, while the latter, as with The Metropolis, implies branding that leans into an abstraction of place. Note, however, that even examples noted as symbolic can have varying degrees of connection to

place and material objects. The representative example of artistic place branding is a campaign called “Google Sheep View” from an island located in the northern hemisphere that we refer to as “The Island”. The campaign was designed to put “the place on the map”.

The moderator of the place branding conference welcomed the presenter Astrid to the stage saying, “What do you do when a small place such as The Island is not even on Google maps? How do you turn that into an advantage through viral marketing success?” After this introduction, Astrid quite abruptly shows a short film about the Google Sheep View campaign and its success:

The film begins by posing the question, “How do you create awareness of one of the smallest, most isolated, and beautiful places in the world? A place where Google Street View hasn’t even been?” Then, with sheep humorously baa-ing in the background, it describes how a small branding team at The Island managed to create a campaign that generated high awareness and engagement. They mounted a 360-degree camera on the back of a sheep, let the sheep walk around on the island, uploaded the images and films to Google’s web, documented the process, and sent out a press release together with Google cardboard VR-glasses. A deep male voice narrates, “Within an hour, it was all over the news and it went viral from there,” while the film shows a rapidly increasing counter of the number of social media shares. The speaker continues: “We engaged our followers and maintained the buzz with new videos and activities. Each time we asked our followers to help, and hashtag #wewantgooglestreetview.” The successful campaign resulted in Google coming to The Island and providing the branders with cameras. The narration states, “We were proud to announce Mission accomplished! And then we went viral again!” The film shows a flow of news clips from all over the world, reporting on the sheep-view initiative, and showing a counter counting up to +2 billion while the narrator says, “we reached more than 40,000, as many as live on The Island. Everyone was mentioning sheep view. In the end, we didn’t just get Google Street view to The Island. We got the whole world’s attention.” The film ends with sheep running over beautiful meadows and the sounds of “baa”.

Unlike the Metropolis example, the initiative here is unique—no one had put a camera on a sheep before. Rather than identifying general, positively loaded terms, the branders created something that is related to how the place is different (in this case by not being on Google Street View) and integrated that with more traditional (e.g., beautiful, attractive, etc.) presentations of the place. Yet, although this example is arguably more material than the Metropolis example, it still represents the symbolic dimension and a high degree of abstraction in that the sheep view initiative is not an integrated part of the material structure of the place, meaning the sheep and the view from the sheep are hardly the point of the campaign. As a result, nobody will use or interact with the initiatives in their everyday practice (in contrast to the totemic types, which we will get to next). Rather, the campaign is

designed to symbolise creativity in the branding process and an ingenuity of spirit as much as, or perhaps more so, than simply showing the countryside. Hence, it contains elements of “viral branding” (Holt, 2002) and designing entertaining initiatives to create a “buzz” in the media landscape to attract the public’s attention.

Totemic place branding

Totemic place branding displays a high degree of uniqueness and materiality. A totem is an established concept within anthropology. In this chapter, we refer to a totem as any object or subject (often considered sacred) that is emblematic of a group of people and their identity (Wagner, 2018). Traditionally “a group of people” has applied to a family, tribe, clan, or lineage, but here it refers to the inhabitants (both people and organisations) of a particular place, such as a city. In that way, both impressive constructions (such as the Eiffel tower) and big companies with reputable brands (such as Google, Facebook, or Apple) can be considered totems in a place-branding strategy, as emblematic of the people living there and their identity. In other words, when a city lands a big brand (a totem), the city and its inhabitants can borrow the brand identity as their own (e.g., we are the type of people who live in the type of place that landed this big brand).

Our illustration of totemic place branding comes from one of the conference’s special sessions focusing on investment promotion and it was about how a small-sized Nordic city managed to “land” Apple. We refer to this city as Apple-City. The chair of the session introduced the speaker, Harry, by stating that landing investments is all about transformation. Harry titled his presentation as a question: “How can small cities attract major investments like an Apple data centre?”

Harry proudly described how his “small city” could attract a “huge investment” in the form of a “gigantic” Apple data centre. He noted that even though tech giants such as Apple, Google, and Meta had invested in other Scandinavian cities, Apple-City started the trend by attracting the world’s biggest brand. Further, Harry outlined the scope of the success, such as being one of the world’s biggest green data centres, employing hundreds of people, and being one of the largest foreign investments in their country to date.

He detailed their proactive approach that included connecting local strengths (e.g., the use of heating surplus and biogas) to what Apple needed. But more than this, and linked to totemic branding practices, Harry also noted that his team understood the Apple mindset and culture. He posed the following questions to the audience: “Are you really the ‘right’ place? Are you committed enough to take the risk and spend the time on landing the investment? Does the political and administrative management understand what it takes?” Here, Harry confirms that landing big tech often requires transformation of a city’s identity, including shifting to become emblematic of the investment/brand one wishes to land. He shared that his city needed to escape their old image that nothing happens there in order to be successful, noting that, “landing Apple transformed the mindset of the city. It becomes easier to do things and to land more businesses now that Apple has settled in”. He then wrapped up his presentation by stating: “So yes, for sure . . . even small cities

can attract the largest investments and land the Apple cloud in their backyard. . . . Go for it—and good luck!”

In this example, the totem (in this case Apple) seems to be ascribed almost magical properties, inhabiting the power to transform the image, identity, and mindset of the city. Thanks to the powerful associations of the Apple brand rubbing off on Apple-City, it is (miraculously) no longer a small traditional town where “nothing happens” but a modern, green, unique city at the technological forefront, and home to one of the world’s most recognised brands. In addition, Harry indicates that attracting the big totem of the Apple data centre makes it easier to attract other big totems to Apple-City. In what bears resemblance to the philosophical anthropologist Girard’s (1972) idea of mimetic desire—that we desire things because others desire them—Apple City thus becomes more attractive and desirable to other potential totems after “marrying” Apple. Although this approach appears quite attractive, a critical concern is that totems can take a central space in cities’ identities, thereby elevating concerns that impact the totem and downplaying or silencing concerns that do not please or concern the totem organisation (Sullivan et al., 2023).

Platformic place branding

Platformic place branding represents place branding practices that express a high degree of isomorphism (thus similar to the Metropolis example) but a low level of abstraction. The former implies that the initiative of one place resembles initiatives of many other places, while the latter implies that the content of the initiative is closely connected to the empirical conditions and the everyday practices of the city.

We refer to platformic place branding as all activities employed to fashion the material outlook of a place with the aim to attain a particular (brand) identity. It resembles urban design—generally referring to the process of forming the physical characteristics of villages, towns, and cities to supply sufficient municipal services to visitors and citizens—but adding that the design is guided by a strategy to develop a brand identity.

Our representative example of platformic place branding surrounds a Mediterranean city and a branding initiative we refer to as Seaside, presented by branding expert Javier.

Javier noted that a transformation of the city was initiated because Seaside had an inferiority complex towards Bayside, a neighbouring harbour city. He then presented the two strategies he used for transforming a city and its brand, showing images of the architecture and new features and exhibits as he spoke. The first was *civic engagement*. This entailed improving the public space together with inhabitants through the co-creation of cultural events, skate parks, and sports activities. It involved replacing street names by local names based in the maritime heritage, building a pergola where local musicians could perform to fill the public space with content, and promoting activities in empty buildings such as art exhibitions.

He referred to the second strategy as *economic activation*, which involved attracting start-ups, small businesses, initiating temporary projects that gave revenue, and launching a website that shared all the ongoing projects on one platform. Javier continued by showing a PowerPoint slide with positive numbers for the past five years, indicating the success of his place making strategy. He then rounded off his presentation with his main conclusions:

“Place-making matters, and it works! A civic engagement strategy is an economic development strategy”. Elastic planning and a permissive framework are required, as well as an emotional and urban reconciliation with the city, and anchored economic activity. “Locals first, tourists will follow”. It should be financially sound, and you need a “creative bureaucracy”.

The Seaside example involves initiatives to animate and improve the quality of a city, or a particular area, for both inhabitants and visitors. This was done through concrete and substantial actions in which several stakeholders, including citizens, were mobilised towards a common objective, in a manner which resembles what Bertilsson and Rennstam (2018) term branding as platforming. Still, the actions performed by Seaside were guided by the strategy to create an identity as a hub of creativity and economic development, and they greatly resemble how other cities usually work in developing their cities and are thus not unique in that respect—rather isomorphic. Javier’s presentation mirrors how urban design in principle is performed as involving both materiality and concrete actions. On the one hand, the Seaside branding project is connected to the material conditions of Seaside. Yet on the other hand, Seaside mimics other popular seaside cities by creating activities and aesthetics that are designed to appeal to an exclusive audience interested in spending time and money on sports, recreation, and attractions.

10.5 Discussion

Our analysis illustrates a typology of place branding based on what place branders present as good branding practice. As a critical model, the typology supports problematisation of the modes of place branding that place branders present as good. In doing so, we wish to highlight two potentially problematic outcomes of the ideal types: *separation* and *homogenisation*.

Separation

Separation is when branding is detached from the core value-creating practices in a city. This is particularly present in mimicry and artistry. Mimicry tends to lure place branders into valuing practices because they imitate other practices rather than because they say something important about or do something good to a place. For instance, in the case of The Metropolis, the presenters say that they were charged with setting the city’s image however they want, suggesting that value criteria are established in the place-branding community rather than in the city. Separation is also explicated when The Metropolis presenters suggest that it is a sign of quality

that other “good” cities (Amsterdam and Copenhagen) brand themselves in the same way as The Metropolis.

Artistry also contains elements of separation. Although artistry may include material elements from the place—like sheep on The Island—their role is secondary. It is not the sheep themselves that are important; they are just vehicles for producing an inventive and witty expression. Therefore, artistry is placed at the symbolic end of the material-symbolic dimension. The function of the material is primarily as a starting point for establishing symbolic value. In The Island case, this is done by starting with the sheep, then creatively imitating Google Street View by attaching a camera to the sheep and letting them run around. Thus, symbolic value is created by unexpectedly connecting the sheep with material (camera) that we usually associate with humans and using it in a way that provides an association to one of the biggest and most hyped tech companies in the world (Google Street View becomes google sheep view). In other words, value is created by unexpectedly connecting elements that previously had nothing to do with each other—a quite postmodern move, resembling Baudrillard’s (see Prasad, 2018) analysis of how commercials for floor wax let a romantic couple slide into each other’s arms on the wax, thus (unexpectedly) combining romance with floor wax. This unexpected link of connections as a way to create value is common today, but it separates the brand from the core of the place.

Homogenisation

Homogenisation is when place branding expertise encourages streamlining elements of a place based on a branding strategy rather than the core problems of the place. Basically, it is an expression of Mumby’s (2016) critical statement that “brands come first, and everyday organising and work processes follow” (p. 886). This critique can be directed to all the types in our model, but it is particularly fruitful when directed toward the totemic and platformic types. These two types display a high level of materiality—they build on things in places such as buildings or corporations—and are therefore not as susceptible to the separation critique as mimetic and artistic branding. However, although it is lower than in artistry and mimicry, they still contain a certain amount of symbolism. For instance, while totemic branding entails developing concrete elements in the city—such as a letting a corporation like Apple establish a conspicuous base—these elements are also meant to symbolise something that is in line with the branding strategy. Apple-City was not just another investment; it symbolised the city being in the forefront of technology. Totemic buildings can function in the same way. For instance, the city of Malmö built the spectacular house Turning Torso in 2001. On the one hand, it has a clear material and practical aspect—it’s a house in which people can live. On the other hand, it was part of the city’s strategy to rebrand itself as a knowledge city and distance itself from its old industrial history (Listerborn, 2017). Thus, the branding strategy homogenises the city by prioritising external elements (such as conspicuous companies like Apple or buildings like Turning Torso) that support the intended city identity.

The same can be said about platformic place branding. While Javier's branding of Seaside city surely entailed material elements, his two initiatives also followed a certain branding strategy of presenting the city identity as creative (the skate parks, co-creation of cultural events) and entrepreneurial (attracting start-ups). Both initiatives were platforms seeking to move the city in an entrepreneurial direction, arguably making it more homogeneously entrepreneurial, prioritising active and creative citizens and behaviour while marginalising less active citizens and more routinised behaviour.

Separation and homogenisation contribute to previous critical studies of place branding. Separation supports prior concerns that a corporate-brand mentality for branding cities can lead to branding that is "superficial" (Carroll and Nelson, 2017), "simple" (Cleave et al., 2019), and amounts to redressing rather than guiding for comprehensive place development (Aronczyk, 2008). Separation also corroborates the argument that place branding commanded by brand experts may be divorced from a city's integrated strategy, physical attributes, and knowledge and concern for numerous stakeholders' needs and wants (Anholt, 2008).

Homogenisation adds to prior concerns by indicating that place-branding expertise encourages cities to streamline and standardise their physical and material conditions in line with a certain and sought-after identity. Scholars have identified that this may lead to less diverse cities as well as exclusive gentrification (Kaneva, 2011).

Expanding our critique further, it is notable that the underlying corporate logic of place branding implies that value is understood in terms of market value. When separation and homogenisation take place in the name of the brand, market value may come to dominate what Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) refer to as civic value (actions striving to maximise the common good). This may imply that investment decisions regarding education, healthcare, or criminal care, to name a few, are guided by what is thought to maximise the brand value of a city rather than the city's real civic needs (e.g., Bertilsson et al., 2020).

By making place branding professionals and city managers aware of the potential for place brands to separate and homogenise cities from their civic core, this chapter seeks to inform about the potentially dysfunctional aspects of place-branding expertise. In this light, we encourage branders and city leaders to develop an expertise that does not put important social values at stake when aiming for increased city brand value.

Notes

- 1 All authors contributed equally to this work.
- 2 <https://futureplaceleadership.com/npbc19/>.

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11 Branding Chongqing

How does the city government manage Chinese city branding?

Bowen Zhang and Mihalis Kavaratzis

11.1 Introduction

The literature on place branding and marketing has grown exponentially in recent years, but it focuses mainly on Western cities, which results in a dominance of developed countries (Wei et al., 2006; Yulong and Hamnett, 2002). With the ongoing shift of political and economic power to Asia (Berg and Björner, 2014), there is increasing research on Chinese cities (Wai, 2006), but this still fails to provide sufficient support for practical issues. City-branding practices have become very popular in China, yet many problems have arisen in Chinese cities. Although several scholars have pointed that there are differences between Chinese and Western place-branding practice (see Björner, 2017; Fan, 2014), we still lack an in-depth exploration and understanding of the basic mechanism and process of a “Chinese” approach to place branding. Therefore, in this chapter, we take a case study approach to investigate how city branding is managed in China. Specifically, we focus on the process of city branding followed in Chongqing, aiming to identify similarities and differences between Chinese and Western city-branding practices. This is an important exploration, as it can lead to a refinement of practices as well as theoretical understanding in China but can also help consolidate place-branding theory based on lessons from non-Western contexts.

11.2 Research design and the case of Chongqing

Places use place branding as a method of competing for “inward investment, tourism revenues and residents at various spatial scales” (Kotler, 2002), with the goal of reinforcing their attractiveness (Mabillard and Vuignier, 2020). Although there is a general tendency to focus on exogenous investment and tourism development in place branding (Kavaratzis, 2012), the importance of residents as an integral part of place branding has been noted (de San Eugenio-Vela et al., 2020; Braun et al., 2013; Klijn et al., 2012; Aitken and Campelo, 2011). In both practice and theoretical research, the main target audiences of place branding are tourists, businesses, and residents. Therefore, our investigation had a tripartite focus on three aspects of city branding which have been discussed extensively in current place-branding research: resident-identity construction, business and commerce attraction,

and tourism attraction, which were studied in three sub-cases, as explained in the following.

Chongqing city is chosen as the case study city for this research, first because it fits the size and administrative criteria necessary for an effective study and evaluation of city branding in China and second because of the city's contemporary status within Chinese cities. Specifically, while "the city of Shenzhen symbolised China in the 1980s and Pudong (the new part of Shanghai) symbolised it in the 1990s, many people now see Chongqing . . . as the embodiment of China in the first decade of the twenty-first century" (Leonard, 2012, p. 2). Recognised officially as a municipality in 1997, Chongqing is one of the largest water, land, and air transportation hubs on the Chinese mainland, where the mighty Yangtze and Jialing rivers conjoin (see Figure 11.1). The administrative divisions of the People's Republic of China consist of provincial-level administrative regions, prefecture-level administrative regions, county-level administrative regions, and township-level administrative regions.

A municipality is one of the administrative divisions of China and has the same administrative status as a province, autonomous region, or special administrative region. Municipalities tend to have larger built-up areas and larger populations and are important in the political, economic, scientific, cultural, and transport aspects of the country. The four existing municipalities directly under the Central Government of China—Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Chongqing—are all located in specific economic regions. Beijing and Tianjin are located in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei city cluster in northern China, Shanghai is located in the Yangtze River Delta city cluster in eastern China, and Chongqing is located in the Chengdu-Chongqing economic zone in southwest China.

The establishment of Chongqing Municipality (see Figure 11.1) directly under the Central Government was an important initiative taken to accelerate the economic and social development of the central and western regions, as explicitly stated on February 27, 1997, by the then Premier Li Peng, in his "Proposal for the Consideration of the Establishment of Chongqing Municipality as a Municipality Directly under the Central Government" submitted to the National People's Congress on behalf of the State Council. In a further explanation of this motion to the Fifth Session of the Eighth National People's Congress on March 6, 1997, State Councillor Li Guixiang elaborated on three major reasons for the establishment of Chongqing as a municipality directly under the Central Government: a) to give full play to Chongqing's location and its role in radiating the southwest and driving the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, b) to help solve the difficulties in administration and development caused by Sichuan's overpopulation and oversized administrative divisions, and c) to facilitate the construction of the Three Gorges Project and the completion of the migration tasks. As can be seen, Chongqing's primary task as a municipality is to develop its economy and address the imbalance in regional development. It enjoys a special national policy in terms of attracting investment.

Covering 26 districts, 8 counties, and 4 autonomous counties, the total administration area of Chongqing is 82,400 square kilometres with a permanent population of 32.1 million, and the city centre area is 5473 square kilometres with a permanent



Figure 11.1 Location of Chongqing in China

population of 9.1 million. To give the reader a better understanding, the city centre area of Chongqing is about 3.5 times bigger than Greater London (not the city of London), which encompasses a total area of 1583 square kilometres. Chongqing municipality has a three-level administration system: a) the municipal government; b) county-level administrative divisions, including 26 municipal districts, 8 counties, and 4 ethnic autonomous counties; and c) the township administrative level that includes 204 sub-districts, 611 towns, 193 townships, and 14 ethnic townships.

Over the past decade, Chongqing developed several city-brand concepts, including (but not limited to) Dream City, City of Magic, and Mutual Wealthy. These city brands were abandoned very soon and cannot even be seen in official documents today. From 1999 to 2014, Chongqing city conducted three major city-branding (or city-promotion) campaigns, Harmony Chongqing, Five Chongqing (Safe Chongqing, Chongqing, Forest Chongqing, Healthy Chongqing, and Convenient Chongqing), and Chongqing Dream. These branding concepts have been developed by various city leaders. In fact, in China, when leaders move out of their position, some of the policies that they introduced during their tenure are “formally” erased. For example, Five Chongqing was proposed by Boxilai, but when he was imprisoned for corruption and bribery, all official descriptions of him disappeared from China. In the West, the direct influence of local leaders in this manner is usually

weaker than in China, where the personal will of the leader has the power to determine policy. This is partly because the city leader in China is usually the local party leader, and the responsibility for the management of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the management of the government falls to the same person. In practice, the actual content of these ideas and concepts is not actually abandoned; for example, the work of Five Chongqing actually includes Harmony Chongqing, and the content of Chongqing Dream includes much of the content of the previous projects, but the official formulation is changed.

Our methodology for the case study involved the collection and analysis of both primary and secondary data. Qualitative methods were used to collect primary data through semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions. A total number of 21 interviews were conducted (see Table 11.1). The research population consisted of leaders, directors, and spokespeople in the tourism, economy, and propaganda sections of the government. Additionally, a manager of a local branding company, a university researcher who participated in the planning and design of the Chongqing place-branding project, and the manager of the Wulong Karst Company (state-owned) were also included. Secondary data consisted mainly of reports and the literature published by the city authorities and marketing or branding agencies, such as promotional brochures, advertising campaigns, development plans, and other reports on strategies adopted and methods implemented by the city government.

Table 11.1 Interviews conducted in the study

	<i>Commerce</i>	<i>Tourism</i>	<i>Resident identity</i>
Municipal level	Principal from Chongqing Municipal Commission of Commerce	Chongqing Tourism Bureau	Chongqing Municipal Culture Commission and Spiritual Civilisation Office
District and county level	Yunyang County Government, Agricultural Bureau, Development and Reform Commission, Government Office, Poverty Alleviation Office Qijiang District Government Office, Business Committee, Development and Reform Commission, Poverty Alleviation Office	Wulong District Government Wulong Tourism Department Qijiang Tourism Department	Qijiang District Office of Spiritual Civilisation Qijiang District Government Office
Township level	Guanyinqiao Business Area Jiefangbei Business Area Nanping Business Area	Yunyang County Qingshui Tujia Township Panshi Town	Nanhu Community

11.3 The city-branding process of Chongqing

Because the Chinese government adopts a linear management approach, the interview process also used a top-down approach. According to the administrative structure of the government, Chongqing is divided into three levels, the municipal level, the district and county level, and the township level, which also gave the direction to a set of three sub-cases that we studied to acquire a comprehensive picture of the branding process of the municipality of Chongqing. We selected and studied three places at the district and county level with mature brands: Yunyang County (business and commerce), Wulong District (tourism), and Qijiang District (resident identity). These cases are very successful and can be considered representative of Chongqing and even the whole country. Officials from the Chongqing Municipal Government highly value the representativeness of these cases and believe that they show the advanced experience of Chongqing. Meanwhile, the government encourages other regions (within Chongqing or outside Chongqing jurisdiction) to learn from their success.

At the government level, the case of Yunyang and Wulong represents a success in terms of the economic benefits of its brand construction and has been recognised by the central government as an example to other regions of China. In the case of Wulong, for example, in 1985, Wulong county¹ was defined as poverty stricken by Sichuan (the former jurisdiction) Provincial Government. The per-capita net income of all residents in the county was lower than 150 yuan, with a poverty rate of 70%.² Until the early 1990s, Wulong was a key county for national poverty alleviation and development and was drowned by Sanxia Dam. The per-capita annual income of the farmers was 333 yuan, and it was a typical western Chinese poverty-stricken county.³ In 2016, Wulong district received 24.5 million tourists and realised a comprehensive tourism income of 7.5 billion yuan.⁴

In a little more than 20 years, Wulong has developed from a poverty-stricken county in Chongqing to a destination with a national and even world brand. In contrast, the Harmony Qijiang project does not generate specific economic benefits. The uniqueness of this case lies in it being built by the Committee Office for the Construction of Spiritual Civilisation, which belongs to the practical department of the propaganda system of the CCP. Similarly, Harmony Qijiang received an award from the Central Civilisation Office for its achievements in promoting “core socialist values”, organising mass spirituality activities, creating typical spirituality, volunteer services, and building the morality of minors. The case of Harmony Qijiang is believed to be successful in building a spiritual identity for local residents.

After the recommendation of the municipal-level government, to enrich the cross-case analysis and get a full understanding of the case of Chongqing, cases of other regions are considered and explored in this research as supplementary materials in the preparation of the cross-case conclusions. Based on the coding of all interviews and secondary data, we summarise the process of Chongqing city branding (as shown in Figure 11.2) and discuss it in detail in the following.

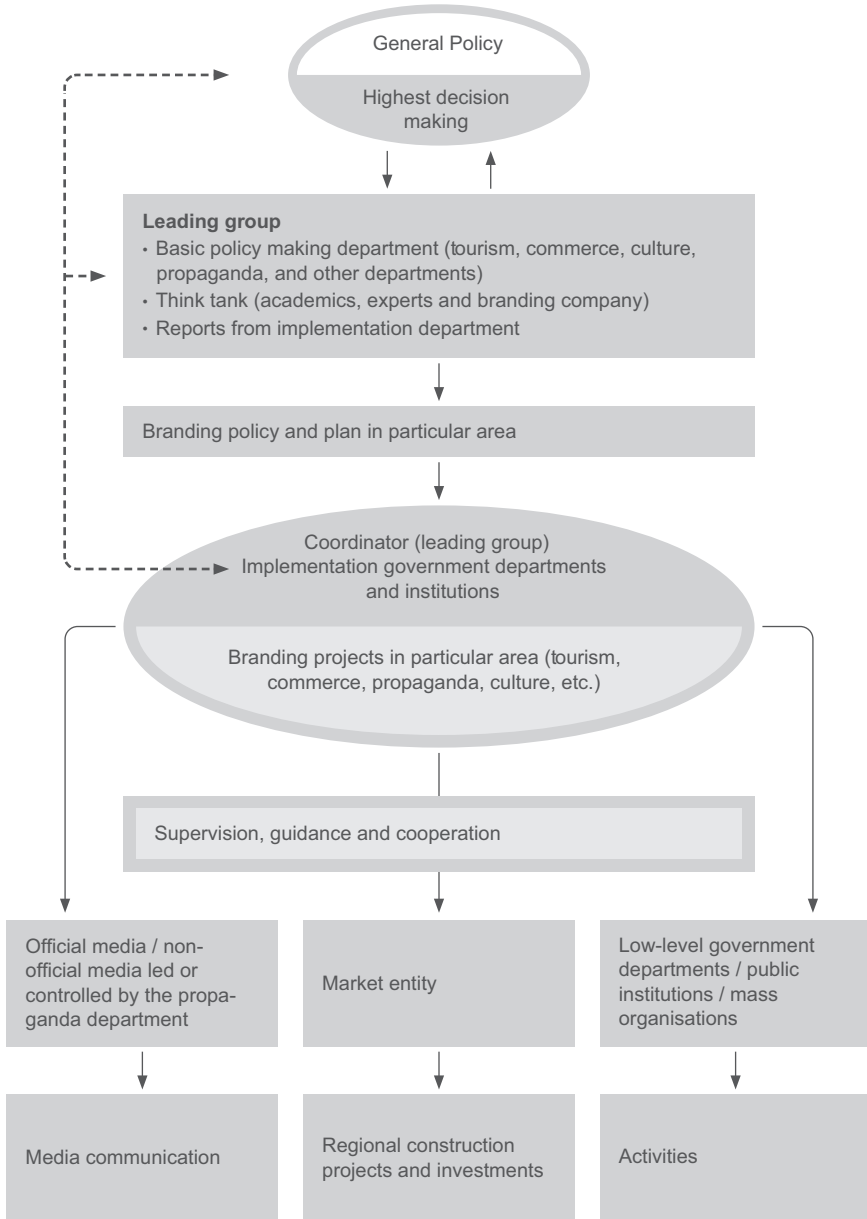


Figure 11.2 The city-branding process of Chongqing

The whole process starts with the formation of local general policy, which is proposed and normally approved by the Chongqing People's Congress. General policy is not necessarily place branding, nor does it contain any branding plans; however, it normally clarifies the positioning and what kind of local identity to construct. Based on this general policy, administration departments generate basic policy plans that combine ideas from think tanks and reports from implementation departments. A leading group, including local top party leaders and government leaders, normally works as a coordinator to make sure individual departments do not make conflicting or contradictory basic policies. These policies and plans contain detailed branding aims, positioning, and slogans. When the branding policy and plan in a particular area is approved by the People's Congress or city government, it is conveyed to government departments and institutions for implementation. Here again a steering committee, which is normally expressed as "leading group" in Chinese (normally leaders from the basic policy-making departments), works as a coordinator of the implementation departments and institutions which decide brand articulation and architecture, requiring cross-department and cross-institution cooperation. Cross-department brand activities (culture, business, and tourism) are very common, which is why the coordinator is needed. The propaganda department⁵ is always involved with all branding activities.

City-branding campaigns have three agents: a) government-led official and government-controlled non-official media conducting communication; b) market entities (including state-owned enterprises and purely private enterprises) carrying out regional project construction or investment; and c) various activities organised by public institutions, low-level government departments, and residents' autonomous organisations (called "mass" organisations). Media propaganda can be divided into domestic and overseas markets. Although the propaganda department completely dominates the content of propaganda/publicity work, the completion of the communication process can also be done by a professional media company. Market entities' regional project construction and investment is the focus of government work because there are clear quantitative indicators to be met. The various activities organised by low-level government departments, institutions, and mass organisations are the basic components of branding. This part of the content is quite rich, from marketing activities organised by the business-area management office, to festival activities organised by the neighbourhood committees and to various mass activities organised by the government, all under the guidance of the initial policy plan. Implementation departments and institutions supervise, guide, coordinate, and cooperate on the subjects included in the plan.

In this system, think tanks assume the role of market research and collect public opinion, which is properly considered in the early stages of decision making. Feedback and evaluation of the entire system come from the report and conference of the implementation department with the basic policy-making department and the high-level decision-making group. Markets involve a large number of interest groups, large-scale project builders, and investors, all of which can greatly influence government decision making, because many branding plans are accompanied by relevant investment-promotion policies: large project builders and investors

thus have a very strong voice in regional brand positioning (both at regional and municipal level). However, this political process behind branding is at a level that cannot be accessed by this study and, therefore, is not discussed in depth.

11.4 The characteristics of Chongqing's branding

The first part of this section presents the main reasons for engaging in city branding, especially in the case of Chongqing. The driving force for places engaging in place branding has always been attracting investment (Mabillard and Vuignier, 2020), which is also one of the most direct benefits of place-branding activity. In the case of Chongqing, it is the fundamental reason city authorities started branding campaigns. At the same time, and similarly to many cases in the West, city branding is considered a plan for the future of the region and a compass for future development. The most obvious evidence for this is provided by the various modernisation and construction projects undertaken in Chongqing. The combination of local strategy and city branding is an important feature of the branding effort, which has obvious Chinese characteristics. First, many localised branding strategies cannot be easily distinguished from place-development strategies. Whether it is Chongqing's positioning in the country or the positioning of districts and counties (within Chongqing), there are top-down instructions with clear policy objectives. For example, the early years of the State Council's 314 overall deployment of Chongqing included three major positioning projects (an important growth hub in the western region, an economic centre in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, and a municipality directly under the central government), one development goal (being the first to build an affluent society in the western region), and four tasks:

- Increase work to promote agriculture, take the town to the countryside, and firmly promote the construction of a new socialist countryside;
- Effectively transform the economic growth mode, accelerate the pace of adjustment, and reform of the old industrial base;
- Focus on solving the problems of people's livelihood and actively build a harmonious socialist society;
- Comprehensively strengthen urban construction and improve urban management.

The Chongqing Municipal Government and the Tourism Bureau positioned Yunyang county as the Yangtze River Three Gorges International Golden Tourism Destination, the city's eco-industrial and commercial logistics base, and a landscape garden eco-city. These have a clear brand-positioning character and work as an overall regional development plan. Although this positioning is considered normative, the combination of desired brand positioning and place-development strategies does indicate what a place should be, which is a fundamental function of place branding. Chinese government management is undergoing transformation (under the context of comprehensive deepening reform), and Chinese city governments today are characterised by entrepreneurialism. In the face of inter-place competition, entrepreneurial place management requires city authorities to adjust regional

management strategies from a strategic perspective. This is why some areas in the case study have implemented branding strategies that compete with similar places and regions in Chongqing, while the use of city branding as a tool for inter-place competition is rare in other cases.

Although the construction of resident identity has always been considered a function of place branding in the existing literature, there is no clear evidence of how to build this identity, and this issue requires significant adaptations based on local cultural understanding and extensive appreciation of the specific socio-political context. There is an extraordinary phenomenon in Chongqing, which is that residents are highly involved in the branding process. Although this participation cannot be precisely compared to Western practices of citizen participation and is not at the decision-making level, resident participation in Chongqing is not simply a matter of completing or implementing the government's top-down policies or tasks. The residents themselves have a certain autonomy and freedom. The government strategy for residents has always been expressed in the form of official documents and reflected in government work assessments. Of course, since the construction of resident identity is a top-down arrangement (such as a clear definition of "civilised citizens" and moral constraint), it can be understood that, on the one hand, residents can only participate passively.

On the other hand, in practice, residents have a lot of space to act freely. Although officials have clearly defined the resident identity that should be built according to the top-down strategy, the residents themselves may choose not to participate in such activities and ignore government requirements. Taking the example of spiritual-civilisation-construction, although the propaganda department clearly defines what spiritual civilisation is, it does not define what activities are spiritual-civilisation construction activities. Therefore, residents' spontaneous community activities can be defined as part of spiritual-civilisation construction. Official activities organised by government authorities are not always responded to by residents, so the government is now seeking a combination of official activities and resident autonomy. The construction of spiritual civilisation is about the government's promotion of resident participation.

The second part of this section deals with concrete management, organisational, and governance issues related to city branding in Chongqing. From the perspective of practice, we can draw a clear conclusion that the brand management, organisation, and governance of Chongqing are similar to those in Western countries. The integration of the place brand with architecture, urban planning (van Assche et al., 2020), and urban strategy, along with the involvement of professional academics, international think tanks, and professional brand companies are common. A considerable number of Chongqing government departments organise study tours around the world. Integrating the opinions of experts (not limited to place-branding professionals) into regional policy is considered an efficient government-management model.

A large number of places have established brand-management agencies or chosen existing government departments to act as brand managers. Brand promotion and marketing is handed over to professional branding companies, and, from the

perspective of brand management, China's place/city branding is quite modern and westernised. There is one major difference in brand communication, which is the use of official media. In contrast to many other countries, China's largest media is the official media, also known as the Party's mouthpiece. A lot of standardisation and streamlined communication is done by the official Chinese media. For example, the official release of the city-image promotion, specific brand strategies or plans, regional development strategies, and all other information related to place branding occurs through official media channels. The combination of official media and mass media is considered necessary in China and is the guarantee of the authority of the information disseminated.

11.5 City branding in a unique political system

An interesting question worth pursuing is whether and how the branding elements and principles of Chinese city branding differ from those of the West. First, there is no significant difference in the brand patterns and templates used. For example, common function-based brands (green city, liveable city, smart city, creative city etc.), national or provincial-level positioning (new industrial zone, import and export centre, logistics centre, financial centre, etc.), and specific brand conversion (such as the Natural Yunyang brand) are common. Some "universal" patterns, such as the construction of cultural cities or smart cities, are widely used in various areas of Chongqing, sometimes as the main brand and sometimes as a sub-brand. Chongqing does not specify the use of unique branding elements. Visible elements, such as landmarks, infrastructure marketing, mega-events, visual communication (slogans, logos, advertisements, etc.), and intangible elements such as culture, resident style, and regional spirit are quite commonly used in Chongqing's branding and throughout China.

Therefore, the branding of Chongqing, as described, is not essentially different, in terms of policy and practice, from that in the West. However, it is fundamentally different from the perspective of the branding bodies, mainly because of the determining role of the government. Overall, Chongqing's brand is very fragmented because of the different areas of responsibility of each department (tourism, business and commerce, culture, spiritual civilisation, etc.). However, there are attempts to achieve coordination in city-branding strategy and practice as elsewhere in China (e.g., in Guangzhou), since effective city branding requires collaboration and coordination among a range of actors, including the central and local government, private sector, and civil-society organisations (Ye and Björner, 2018). Although the findings from Chongqing do not demonstrate systematic integration of all aspects of place/city branding, they show that the city-brand system includes objective, tangible regional shaping (infrastructure, urban development and planning, regional products and industries) and the perception of intangible elements by the audiences (services, history and culture, resident image, etc.). Ideally, systematic brand engineering would include the overall integration of the contents of the place brand (tourism, business, resident identity, investment, culture, etc.) and city branding would serve as a platform for multi-level governance by

facilitating communication, collaboration, and partnerships among these actors (Ye and Björner, 2018).

However, this is not often the reality in general city-branding practice (in the West), since many difficulties arise in real-life operation. Due to the number and diversity of stakeholders involved in branding, Western multi-party-government countries are basically unable to achieve a high degree of integration, but as a single-party country, China has the practical and theoretical basis to implement systematic, comprehensive brand construction. This might be deemed undesirable or problematic for ideological or political reasons, but it does seem to help with effectiveness: in a single-party country, the government can more easily advance its political agenda because there are no opposing voices or resistance from different parties or factions (Diamond, 2008; Svolik, 2012). Additionally, single-party countries may be able to achieve long-term planning and stability more easily because they do not have to consider the impact of election cycles (Svolik, 2012). In such countries, the government can more easily take major policy decisions such as economic development, infrastructure construction, political reforms, and so on.

From the beginning of the economic reforms and opening up in 1979 to the recent comprehensive deepening of reforms, the Chinese government has always emphasised a market-oriented economy, which provides a strong realistic basis for China's market-driven place branding. This is a clear indication that there is no fundamentally significant difference between the Chinese approach to place branding and Western practices. The impact of politics on Chinese place branding cannot be ignored and clearly differs from practices observed in other places. Our study confirms the three ways this impact becomes evident, as identified by Berg and Björner (2014): a) the top-down impact of ideology on the positioning of brands and slogans (from the national level to the region), b) the media controlled by the CCP propaganda department taking responsibility for brand communication, and c) the political influence on both the administration and the governance of Chinese place-branding efforts. These aspects can be seen as the major difference between place branding in China and in the West. In China, there is a parallel system of influence at the city level, with the administrative influence headed by the city mayor and the political influence led by the local secretary of the CCP at city level. The division of power and responsibility between the government administration and the CCP causes difficulties in practice, since the administrative leader is responsible for specific branding work, strategic issues, and localising the Party's policies, while the Party leader is responsible for the ideological work. Consequently, it can be considered that the part of the branding that involves the government administration is more market oriented and westernised, while the ideological part has more Chinese characteristics.

In China, the political nature of place branding has an important externalisation aspect that is ubiquitous: outdoor advertising. Changes in the content and messages of billboards are closely related to the development of Chinese cities, with the following main characteristics: commercialisation, internationalisation, regional differences, and an emphasis on resident quality and spiritual-civilisation construction (Lewis, 2002). The government is constantly and actively combining political information,

public-welfare propaganda, and business information. Advertisers are required to use some locations to post relevant content. As a result, advertising companies have begun to combine commercial advertising with government advocacy in various ways.

In Chongqing (and almost every city in China), in addition to slogan-style advertisements, there are many specific requirements and norms for the behaviour of citizens. “Citizen quality” and “urban civilisation” have become key words of political propaganda (see cases in Björner, 2017). The emphasis on quality and civilisation is not simply ideological. Cartier (2016) believes that these slogans are not so much political brainwashing as part of a civilised city-assessment system. Spiritual-civilisation construction is a development goal juxtaposed with material civilisation in China. Urbanisation and market-oriented reform are the most important material foundations and main driving forces of spiritual-civilisation construction. Lewis (2002) believes that through this kind of communication, the government has increased the visibility of political communication and allowed the public to receive such political information more frequently. Under the dual influence of business and market, the combination of traditional urban politics, public-welfare propaganda, and place-brand communication has become a Chinese sort of place branding (Parkerson and Saunders, 2005). Chinese place branding contains more political propaganda than Western practice; however, we cannot arbitrarily make the statement that this is only the case in China, since it is also seen in Western practice (see Parkerson and Saunders, 2005).

11.6 Reflections on the case of Chongqing

The government, certainly, is the central agent of Chinese place branding, and there is a clear top-down planning approach to be seen in Chinese practice. However, does this mean the government actually constructs place/city brands? If we simply consider the place brand a name, term, design, symbol, or other feature that identifies a place, the answer might be yes. Yet it is a definite no if we consider the place brand people perceive and experience. Answering this question is not an easy task, and it does not require a clear definition but cautious analysis based on individual cases.

Although cross-sectoral collaboration is common in Chongqing branding, these collaborations happen more in the promotion and marketing activity rather than in the top design of a holistic brand. The government sector’s brand awareness is very weak and lacks systematic thinking. Due to the lack of synergy between departments, it is difficult for the government to consider the parallel creation of multiple brand systems. Regional leaders and political changes also affect the continuity of branding (which is not so much the case in Western practice), and how to solve this issue is a question for researchers and practitioners (Hankinson, 2010).

The transfer of knowledge and practices from one political and socio-cultural context to another is always problematic and needs careful consideration. This chapter has explored the practice of city branding in China and identified several differences from Western practice but also substantial common ground. We hope that the conversation around the applicability of place branding in various settings

and the adaptations that are necessary will continue, since it can provide valuable lessons for further theoretical and practical development of the field, as also highlighted by recent contributions such as that of Lu and de Jong (2019).

Notes

- 1 Before the Chongqing municipality was set up, most of Chongqing was part of Sichuan province. In December 1998, Wulong County was directly managed by Chongqing Municipality. On November 24, 2016, the State Council officially issued the “Reply of the State Council on Agreeing to Adjust Some Administrative Divisions in Chongqing” (Guo Han [2016] No. 185), which revoked Wulong County and established Wulong District.
- 2 This data was dictated by the respondent. There is no relevant data for research for the period.
- 3 Wulong tourism official website, available at: www.wlkt.com/wlxw/20131025/7874.html, accessed 20/08/2018.
- 4 2017 Wulong Tourism Bureau Work Report.
- 5 The main function of the propaganda department (now renamed the publicity department) is to control ideology, press and publishing, and even educational guidelines. It supervises the various institutions related to the media, the internet, and cultural communication in mainland China, as well as censoring the press, publishing, television, and film. In practice, propaganda departments control almost every part of brand communication.

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12 The case of Benin, West Africa

The “Revealing Benin” programme

Bellarminus G. Kakpovi

12.1 Introduction

In an increasingly globalised world, the race for foreign direct investment (FDI) is becoming very competitive, especially in Africa, a continent generally perceived as an amorphous grey mass of poverty, corruption, war, famine, and diseases, among several other inauspicious features (Osei and Gbadamosi, 2011). These perceptions led to a “continent brand effect which has a negative impact on all African countries” (Papadopoulos and Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015, p. 55). In this context, the use of place branding has grown significantly, with many nations engaging the services of consultants and specialists to define strategies to significantly improve their brand image and profile (Browning, 2016).

To attract investment, African nations feel a growing need to resort almost systematically to nation branding to differentiate themselves from competing offerings on the continent. They are developing exogenous promotional activities with the aim of making their economies attractive (Matiza and Oni, 2013), promoting their strengths, and improving “the negative aspects of the continent brand effects” (Papadopoulos and Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015, p. 55). In some cases, this goes beyond economic ambitions and also aims to promote tourism, as is the case in several countries such as Zimbabwe, South Africa, Kenya, and, recently, Benin. As a result, nation branding can also be seen as an important tool for cultural and tourism promotion. Hurn (2016) speaks in this respect of cultural diplomacy in relation to nation branding.

However, investigations into the African context are rare, since most academic contributions have focused on Western countries and, more recently, Asian countries. This is the case with the brands “Incredible India!” or “Malaysia, Truly Asia” and the countries described as the Asian Tigers, a concept often used in the economic and financial literature to describe the good performance achieved by some Asian states. Matiza and Oni (2013) have drawn a similarity with the African continent by referring to African Lions, a nickname for Africa’s growing economies, which had a collective gross domestic product (GDP) of roughly \$1 trillion in 2021. These economies include Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, and South Africa. Some authors argue that it is the turn of these African countries to experience rapid and significant development.

Although Africa remains virtually absent from the literature on the subject, it is worth recalling Spio's (2011) seminal study on city branding in Accra, Ghana. Subsequently, a few studies have been conducted on the continent, from Morocco (with the "WeCasablanca" brand) to Zimbabwe, South Africa, Kenya, and Tanzania mostly. Southern Africa alone accounts for more than two-thirds of publications about the continent. In contrast, West Africa, despite some attempts, notably the publication of Adegoju (2017) on Nigeria, has gone unexplored. This absence is particularly marked in the Francophone part of West Africa. As a result, this chapter is, to our knowledge, one of the first studies that focuses on one of these Francophone countries in the area: Benin.

The objective of this chapter is twofold. First, it aims to examine and highlight the action taken by the Beninese government in terms of place branding, development, and attractiveness. Second, it aims to fill an important gap in the literature from a geographical point of view. It starts with a presentation of the political and institutional context of Benin through a brief historical and institutional overview. Then we discuss place branding as a strategy for economic and territorial development. We also highlight the role of place branding in the development process initiated by Benin, and, finally, we highlight the key measures undertaken by the country.

12.2 The Beninese political and institutional context

Independent since 1 August 1960, Benin borders the Atlantic Ocean and shares frontiers with Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Togo, and Niger. It is part of a region that has long been marked by political, institutional, economic, and social upheavals. In this context, Benin stands out by virtue of having a well-established democracy in the region (Mabillard et al., 2020).

In the early 1990s, Benin underwent a profound "political transformation" (Frère, 1998), which is still evident today in the smooth functioning of its democratic institutions. Topanou (2013, pp. 16–17) stresses the importance of Benin building a "democratic society and a state governed by the rule of law that respects human rights". Quantin (2009, p. 74) has described this democratic society, which guarantees the proper functioning of state institutions, as a "liberal democracy". The other characteristic of this democratic model, apart from the proper functioning of its democratic institutions and the respect of human rights, is the organisation of competitive and contested elections. In 2021, Benin organised its seventh presidential election (after those of 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2016), which demonstrates that the country has initiated and maintained a process of electoral habituation, symbolising a strong dynamic of democratic institutionalisation.

To maintain this dynamic, Benin relies on a presidential regime on the one hand and a solid institutional architecture on the other. The president of the republic is the head of state (Article 41 of the Constitution), the holder of executive power, and the head of government (Article 54). (S)he determines and conducts the policy of the nation, exercises regulatory power, and ensures that policies and power are correctly administered. Then there is the legislative power, the National Assembly,

which has legislative prerogatives and control over government action (Article 79). Finally, the judicial power is independent of the first two institutions and is exercised by the Supreme Court, the courts, and tribunals. Other no less important institutions govern the functioning of the Beninese state, such as the Constitutional Court (the highest court of the state in constitutional matters), the Social Council (which gives its opinion on draft laws, ordinances or decrees), and the High Authority for Audiovisual and Communication (which guarantees the freedom of the press).

With this solid politico-institutional framework as a foundation, the country has since 2016 made a decisive turn in terms of development and promotion of the country. Two main priorities have emerged: 1) economic development and 2) touristic and cultural attractiveness.

12.3 Economic development as the main country's priority

From a theoretical point of view, studying the issue of place branding in Africa is a complex task, since the continent remains under-researched and poorly understood (Matiza and Oni, 2013). While Papadopoulos and Hamzaoui-Essoussi (2015) insist on the various factors that have created a “bleak” image of the continent, they choose to emphasise opportunities and speak of a so-called “African Renaissance”. They see the attractiveness of the continent in terms of tourism and investment, following the example of the option taken by Benin for its attractiveness. They point out that this perspective can be broken down into a number of factors with the potential, if properly combined, to improve Africa's attractiveness for both tourists and investors. These factors include the emergence of a middle class, growing interest from major global companies in Africa, the world's youngest population, and so on.

Nevertheless, most countries south of the Sahara are still facing several problems. As mentioned, these issues include underdevelopment, the negative image of the continent due to war, colonial history, famine, bad governance, corruption, and impunity, all of which result in difficulties mobilising financing and investment on the international market. To solve these problems, several countries have set up projects and programmes for economic and place development and have adopted branding strategies to promote their country as a destination for both tourism and investment. Benin is no exception to this situation. Regarding place development, Benin's top priorities include the promotion of both tourism and culture. However, like most of its neighbours, Benin is a developing country that still depends heavily on FDI and international aid. In this regard, economic development is therefore a key priority, unlike in the Western cases typically presented and investigated in the academic literature. As a result, since 2016, the new president, Patrice Talon, and his government have prioritised economic development through the mobilisation of FDI. At the same time, the promotion of Benin as a tourist destination has become central in the country's development process. The government has also decided to emphasise the role played by new technologies to enhance the country's economic attractiveness.

Several authors have written that business opportunities in Africa are increasing and that “Africa’s own companies are on the internationalization path, and the continent’s resources remain as plentiful as ever” (Papadopoulos and Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015, p. 62). However, the situation observed in many countries contrasts with this point of view. In Benin, although the stable political and democratic situation provides more credibility and stability compared with other states in the region, the country is struggling to attract foreign investment, which is necessary for the development of its economy. Table 12.1 shows that while FDIs have increased in 2021, they were quite low in the preceding years, especially compared with some of the “African Lions” mentioned previously, such as Ethiopia and Ghana. Mozambique is an exception, as FDI is booming in that country, where discoveries of large offshore natural-gas deposits have created numerous opportunities for investment (Toews and Vézina, 2022). Apart from 2021, Benin followed the trend of the sub-Saharan region in the period 2017–2020.

Although Benin has many opportunities to attract local and international investment because of its geography and political advantages, it has long been confronted with challenges in attracting and promoting favourable conditions for investment, notably because of its image. Today, as in other contexts and in the literature, Benin as a place orchestrates its promotion specifically to attract tourists and investors while differentiating itself from competing offers, given the number of similarities with states in the region. As Browning writes (2016, p. 54), “in this world, being visible, possessing a national reputation for having something distinctive to offer and having a brand becomes fundamental in being able to claim a slice of the global economic and political market”.

To meet these challenges, Benin is adopting a two-pronged approach. First, the country is focusing on development in the broad sense by adopting an ambitious development plan covering the period 2016–2021, called “Revealing Benin”. It is broken down into reforms, flagship projects, and sectoral programmes planned over the five-year period. The authorities have conceived this programme as the sole instrument for steering government action. “Revealing Benin” is a comprehensive development plan that sets out the diagnosis, vision, and strategic direction of the

Table 12.1 Foreign direct investment in current US\$, net inflows (% of GDP), 2017–2021

<i>Country/Region</i>	<i>Year</i>				
	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
Benin	1.6%	1.4%	1.5%	1.1%	2.0%
Ivory Coast	1.9%	1.1%	1.5%	1.2%	2.0%
Ethiopia	4.9%	4.0%	2.7%	2.2%	3.8%
Ghana	5.4%	4.4%	5.7%	2.7%	3.4%
Mozambique	17.5%	11.3%	22.0%	22.7%	33.6%
Sub-Saharan Africa	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	3.8%

Note: FDI refers to cross-border investment associated with a resident in one economy having control or a significant degree of influence on the management of a company that is resident in another economy (criterion: ownership of 10% or more of the ordinary shares of voting stock). *Source:* The World Bank

government's ambitions, the modalities for its implementation, and the three pillars on which the country's development project is based: 1) consolidating democracy, the rule of law, and good governance; 2) committing to the structural transformation of the economy; and 3) improving the population's living conditions. To better promote this government action programme, the "Revealing Benin" brand (Figure 12.1) was created, with a graphic charter that the various ministries and government agencies are obliged to respect.

Place development and infrastructures play a major role in Benin's strategy. These include tourism, hotel, and road infrastructures and basic services (access to electricity, drinking water and health care, social protection) intended to improve the living conditions of the population but also to better welcome foreigners and investment.



Figure 12.1 The "Revealing Benin" brand

Source: ©Government of Benin, 2023

The second part of this approach is aimed at promoting the previous measures but also “destination Benin”. Communication is done at two levels: first, it consists of highlighting a certain number of conditions and/or advantages that Benin offers and, second, of requiring certain national or international actors to produce and/or broadcast videos to increase the country’s visibility. This is the case of the promotional video of the Pendjari wildlife park produced and broadcast by the international television channel National Geographic. This resulted from an agreement signed by the managers of the channel and the Beninese authorities through the African Parks Network that is in charge of the management and development of the park. This desire to promote Benin was affirmed by the Beninese president on December 16, 2016:

My ambition is for Benin to be a country of dynamism and creation, welcoming investment from all over the world and offering a more favourable framework for economic activity. . . . I wanted the government’s action programme to bear a name that symbolises our approach. This name is “Revealing Benin”. I believe that it is time to reveal to the whole world, but also to ourselves, the incredible potential of our country. . . . Too many investors are unaware of our country’s assets. It is urgent to remedy this and we have in our hands all the assets to achieve this.

(reported and translated by the author)

This statement followed the launching ceremony of the strategic and programmatic document entitled “Revealing Benin”. It targeted 2025 as the time horizon for evaluating the various measures and reforms undertaken. The objective was, according to Beninese politicians, to make the country a reference point for attracting investors not only from Africa but also from the rest of the world. These aims strongly resemble those of the “Vision 2030” plan adopted in 2016 by Saudi Arabia, where the strategy aims to diversify the country’s economy and reduce its dependence on oil, becoming a global model of excellence and promoting a softer image of the kingdom. This shows that Western countries are not the only source of inspiration and influence and that non-Western countries are proposing visions that are being replicated on other continents. Once again, this has gone largely unexplored in the academic literature.

Economic development and attractiveness are the main priority, as stated in Pillar 2 of “Revealing Benin”, entitled “Engage in the structural transformation of the economy, improve economic growth, improve the performance of education”. It is supported by two actions. On the one hand, it involves the creation of an economic market that Kaneva (2011) would describe as homogeneous, in this case the construction of a specialised economic and industrial zone called the Glo-Djigbé Industrial Zone (GDIZ). This market should enable Benin to demonstrate its ability to compete in the global economy and its ability to gain a competitive economic advantage, mainly by attracting investment and quality human capital. Concerning this first point, the clearly stated ambition of the authorities is to make their country, as Sedra and El Bayed (2022) observed in their work on the case of the city

branding of Casablanca, a competitive territory and a vector of wealth creation. According to Romuald Wadagni, minister of state for the economy and finance:

The first priority is to establish the credibility of our economy. With such a degraded macroeconomic environment, it was impossible to attract investors, technical partners for the execution of our Action Programme. So, we must do everything possible to establish the credibility of our government.

(remarks from the joint Government of Benin—
International Monetary Fund briefing, Cotonou,
22 February 2017. Reported and translated by the author)

The Beninese authorities' aim is thus to make the country a major place for investment and industry in West Africa. It materialised in 2020 by means of a public–private partnership (PPP) between the Beninese government and the ARISE group,¹ respectively holding 35% and 65% of the shares. This partnership is not exclusive to the industrial sector, as Benin adopted a law in 2016 on the legal framework for public–private partnerships. This legislation has encouraged the conclusion of several public–private contracts in sectors such as health, maritime, airport, and road infrastructure.

The ARISE group became the technical partner in the implementation and development of the industrial-zone project, bringing its expertise in the field. The partnership with ARISE in Benin differs from those the group developed in other countries, notably in Togo and Gabon: in the first country mentioned, the group processes cotton and in the second exclusively wood. However, in Benin, the partnership covers a much larger area and the processing of several goods, the main vocation of the GDIZ being the *in-situ* processing of five key products: cotton, cashew, shea, soya, and pineapple. In addition to these products, other sectors such as the assembly of electric vehicles or motorcycles, smartphones, pharmaceutical products, and so on are also involved.

To this end, the two parties, in their joint desire to position Benin as a country that brings together the necessary conditions to create a positive climate for business, set up a joint venture that led to the creation of the Investment and Industry Promotion Company (SIPI-BENIN), whose role is to develop, operate, manage, and promote the zone. It also seeks to make sites available to companies and works closely with another state structure, the Investment and Export Promotion Agency (APIEx), to attract investors to the industrial zone.

It is worth noting that Benin used to export about 60% of its cotton to Bangladesh and the rest to China for processing into clothing. From now on, the country wants to produce garments on its own territory thanks to investments in the GDIZ, one of the largest in Africa, with a strategy that consists of “working to be competitive in a global environment. This means being able to produce quality and volume with a plannable frequency” (translated by the author).²

At the time of writing, 36 investors (out of the expected 100) have actually deployed (or are in the process of deploying) their activity on the site for the first phase of the project, a statistic that remains slightly below the stated ambitions, but

the government is working constantly to attract international investors in a regional context characterised by fierce competition for soliciting FDI. In this regard, President Patrice Talon met with the Movement of the Enterprises of France on August 30, 2022. He invited investors to take an interest in his country, “an oasis in Africa where the problems of education and health are being resolved at great speed”. The will of the Beninese authorities, widely promulgated during this meeting, is to build what Bellosso (2010, p. 48) has called “a unique and attractive place . . . expected . . . to become an ideal place to live, work, visit, study or do business”.

In addition, the government wants to make the country’s capital Cotonou into the West African hub for digital services through the creation of an international city of innovation and knowledge called Sèmè City. This project relates to the ambition of connecting digital development to economic growth and making the country attractive to start-ups in West Africa. Claude Borna, director general of the International Knowledge and Innovation City, confirmed this approach in a promotional video presented in December 2016. She insisted on the authorities’ desire to restore Benin’s position as “the Latin quarter” of 21st-century Africa and to develop a dynamic knowledge economy. The Beninese government is targeting the year 2030 for the realisation of this objective and plans to have more than 60 training organisations, 130,000 graduates, 250 young companies, 190,000 direct and indirect jobs, and 1/3 of people self-employed. Three main poles of activity make up this city: higher education, research, and development and entrepreneurship. The stated ambition is to become a reference for Africa and the world.

To achieve this, the authorities felt it imperative to create a high-speed Internet network that would allow services and related applications to be established. Certain programmes, projects, and measures were initiated: the development and generalisation of e-commerce, the ongoing deployment of more than 5000 kilometres of optical fibre, the completed construction of a national data centre for data storage, the creation of digital business incubators, the simplification of government services with a view to making them accessible via mobile phones, the creation of online services (civil status, driving licences, consultation of online files, land procedures, business creation, electronic payments), the improvement of the performance of the administration, now mostly dematerialised, and the security of the system.

A first “Sèmè One” campus located in Cotonou now welcomes students, researchers, start-ups, entrepreneurs, and partners. Although it is too early to measure its impact, one of the main achievements was the creation of the Africa Design School in October 2019. The first design school in West Africa, it was initiated by the Nantes Atlantique Design School in partnership with Sèmè City. The campus welcomes students from several countries in the region, such as Cote d’Ivoire, Congo, and Cameroon, and interns from France.

Another feature of this “Made in Africa” training consists in the establishment of partnerships with European and other African countries. On 22 July 2022, during the visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to Sèmè City, a number of partnership agreements were signed with French academies and schools, including Sorbonne University, the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne, and the

Ducasse school. France is not the only country in demand in terms of partnerships for the relocation of certain training courses to Benin. Rwanda and Morocco were also contacted. As a result, a partnership agreement was signed with the Ecole Centrale Casablanca and the Ecoles Centrales group.

Promotion of the tourist and cultural destination as a development priority

Economic and technological attractiveness is not the only axis on which the Beninese authorities are working to position their country in the region: tourism and culture play a key role in their development strategy. In recent years, tourism has become an important source of employment, economic development, and growth in many countries, thanks to the revenue it generates. On the African continent, tourism is the fastest-growing sector outside of the extractive industries and offers significant potential for investment (Papadopoulos and Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015). Many countries have therefore developed public policies, set up institutions, and provided support to the tourism industry. Studies have described the conditions for attracting visitors: the promotion of a rich cultural, historical, and natural heritage (Ezeuduji and Nkosi, 2017; Maumbe and van Wyk, 2015); the organisation of major events of all kinds (Arnaud et al., 2018); and the availability of infrastructures such as hotels and transportation and high-quality touristic guides.

In this context, largely dominated by the countries of East, South, and North Africa, certain West African countries stand out, among them Cape Verde, Gambia, and Senegal. Although endowed with a rich, diversified tourism and heritage potential, Benin has for a long time not been able to develop its tourism, either domestically or externally, the availability of adequate infrastructure, stability, and security being key factors that investors and tourists consider (Mabillard and Vuignier, 2021). In Benin, the absence of a structured tourism-development programme, the lack of high-quality infrastructure, the lack of enhancement and promotion of its heritage, and the security problem have impeded development and promotion of the country as a tourist destination. This explains why the Beninese government has focused its attractiveness policy on a more global strategy that includes the need to develop the country in terms of infrastructure, security, and above all the country's economic development.

In 2016, the new authorities defined an ambitious tourism-development and heritage-promotion programme following a diagnosis by the president of the Republic:

We can be proud of our extraordinary historical, cultural, and natural heritage. This heritage should enable us to develop tourism, a sector that provides many jobs, and is capable of making Benin shine in the world. Finally, we have human capital of great reputation, with many Beninese who distinguish themselves throughout the world in the scientific, cultural, artistic, and sports fields. We will market our cultural values. We are going to reveal to the world this heritage that is so rich, so intense, so beautiful, and the world will enjoy discovering it.

(reported and translated by the author)

Benin's approach to promoting tourism relies on memorial, safari, and beach tourism. It prioritises the construction and development of infrastructures and has promoted several reforms. The government has undertaken to build hotels and a seaside resort under the Club Med brand (a French tourism operator headquartered in Paris); to rehabilitate historic royal palaces open to tourists; to build, with the support of the French Development Agency, a museum called the Epic of the Amazons and Kings of Danxomè; to rebuild the historic town of Ouidah, with the development of a memorial route relating to the slave trade; and to build lodges within the Pendjari wildlife park to facilitate the reception of tourists. As mentioned, a partnership was signed with the National Geographic television channel for the promotion and preservation of species in the park. These projects are implemented by the government agency created for this purpose, the National Agency for the Promotion of Heritage and Development of Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism. However, this safari project has come to a major halt due to the security threat in the north of the country. Since 2019, the park has experienced several incursions by jihadist groups operating in the neighbouring countries of Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Togo. As of early 2023, the park is closed to visitors.

In addition to the infrastructure programme, the government has undertaken a training project for tourist guides. A first cohort of 54 guides is being trained with the support of the World Bank and the World Tourism Organization. The new Agency for the Development of Technical and Vocational Education will take over with the creation of a school for the tourism, hotel, and restaurant trades. Benin's leaders have also decided to facilitate access to the country for any African or non-African visitors. First, there is a visa exemption for all African passport holders to target African tourists. Second, the introduction of an electronic visa (e-visa) for non-Africans, launched on 23 April 2018, should attract international tourists. Despite all these reforms, and the recent arrival of cruise ships, the destination remains largely unknown. The Beninese authorities have set up a committee of international experts tasked with proposing appropriate tourist offerings to different target markets (Asia, Europe, safari markets, Afro-descendants in the United States, and the Nigerian market specifically).

Finally, to make Benin a reference tourist destination in West Africa, the authorities have chosen to build flagship buildings. The aim is not only to construct a national narrative appealing to all Beninese people but also an identity or a feeling of belonging to national history. The most famous monument is the Amazon statue (Figure 12.2), inaugurated on 30 July 2022. This statue arouses the pride of the women and the entire Beninese people, honouring the Agodjié, a fighting corps made up exclusively of women warriors established by Queen Tassi Hangbè, the sole ruler of Danxomè between 1708 and 1711. Together with other monuments, the statue represents a symbol of the country's history, and constitutes new attractions for tourists.

Although several large-scale projects and reforms have been or are being implemented with the aim of making Benin an attractive economic and tourist destination, international promotion, particularly to its intended targets, is still lacking.



Figure 12.2 The Amazon monument in Cotonou

Source: ©Government of Benin, 2023

While occasional initiatives have been taken, what Sedra and El Bayed (2022) call “place-brand communication” (through storytelling and the organisation of major events) is structurally almost absent.

In Benin, the process of positioning and promoting the country as a destination was developed and implemented in a top-down manner. In 2016, newly elected President Patrice Talon confronted his ambitions with the realities on the ground and launched a project called “A New Start”. The Government Action Programme (GAP) 2016–2021 “Revealing Benin” was part of the project and therefore essentially a government initiative at the national level. However, it must be added that there were interactions between the government, its agencies and specialised structures, and the local authorities.

In addition to design, implementation is also mostly a government initiative. Whether focused on the economy, the improvement of the business environment, the development of tourism, or the promotion of culture and innovation, implementation of these programmes and projects aimed at territorial development is almost entirely the work of the central government. There are several decision-making bodies, ranging from the president of the republic to the Council of Ministers. Sectoral ministries are responsible for carrying out activities to achieve the objectives set. To ensure efficient implementation of the GAP, the government decided to create a number of specialised agencies, including the National Agency for the Promotion of Heritage and Development of Tourism (ANPT). The ANPT is

currently working on the definition of an identity for Benin as a destination; the creation and development of innovative tourism projects; and the promotion of Benin as a destination at the national, regional, and international level. It is implementing a tourism-development programme valued at CFA 350 billion (US\$ 575 million). The Agency for Information Services and Systems (which is responsible for the execution of flagship projects relating to smart government, e-commerce, and dematerialisation), the APIEx, and the Agency for Sustainable Development are also involved in the implementation of the GAP.

One of the last specialised agencies created, Benin Tourism, plays the role of tour operator. Aiming at the continental and international markets, the authorities have assigned this agency the mission of coordinating all measures designed to promote and strengthen Benin's tourist position internationally. This mission is in line with all the measures explained previously, such as the introduction of e-visas, or the promotion of the country's cultural heritage and geographical assets.

The National Agency for Land and Property is responsible for land management and expropriation on behalf of the state. Because Benin's development strategy is top down, it is sometimes necessary to expropriate landowners in order to build infrastructure and complete various projects that require space. This raises the question of the relationship between governments and citizens. The relationship can be assessed in different ways, even though generally speaking, the declaration of an area's public utility leads to financial and/or material compensation for the owners affected. Compensation is paid by the agency. Two new features have been introduced by the current authorities: first, commitments are made to impacted or neighbouring populations to give them priority in terms of recruitment for projects or access to infrastructure; second, the government generally brings together the actors and populations impacted to explain the added value of the projects.

Most projects and programmes, whether for the country's development or its promotion, are carried out within the municipalities directly impacted by government measures. If an initiative is governmental, local authorities may be involved in identifying and providing land required for the execution of projects. For example, for the construction of the new sports stadiums listed in the "Revealing Benin" programme, the Ministry of Sports requested that municipalities make the necessary land available. The municipalities deliberated in session and made the land available to the government through a communal decree. In the case of projects carried out in several municipalities, joint municipal committees have been set up.

12.4 The role of place branding in the development process

"Revealing Benin", as conceived by the country's leaders, appears to be more of a strategic and programmatic document for the country's development than an organised vision for the branding of Benin. Although "Revealing Benin" functions as a brand with a logo and a visual identity, promoting the country's attractiveness in terms of investment, digital progress, culture, and tourism, it does not provide clear guidelines for branding the country. However, according to Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003), branding cannot be limited to just the use of a logo or a brand name

by an organisation. Aware of this issue, the Beninese government recruited Jean-Wilfried Kemajou, a branding consultant, at the end of the first quarter of 2022. The next step will be the adoption by Benin of a branding strategy at the national, continental, and international level. This phase will coincide with the completion of several infrastructure projects that will strengthen Benin's capacity to welcome more tourists and offer more opportunities for investment.

The fact that the Beninese authorities have used "Revealing Benin" to bring together many diverse projects (45 flagship projects, 95 sectoral projects, and 19 institutional reforms in innovation, tourism, culture, arts, infrastructure, agriculture, sports, and even politics) makes it "an umbrella brand" (one used simultaneously for a set of heterogeneous elements (Vuignier, 2018, p. 16)) or what Albertini et al. (2017) have termed a "comprehensive and unifying umbrella-brand approach".

To achieve its promotion and economic development objectives, the government has defined a total budget of CFA 12,000 billion (US\$ 20 billion) for all projects. At the local level, most authorities have adopted the "Revealing Benin" brand for most of their municipal-development projects and plans. Since municipalities rely primarily on the transfer of financial resources from the central state, they remain largely dependent on the central authorities, with little autonomy. Ultimately, the brand image is confused with the country's image, and municipalities have generally adopted the brand created at the national level. Thus, Benin intends to build a national narrative based on its history and national policy: the authorities have mobilised the brand image of the Amazon (see Figure 12.2); that of the fighter Bio Guerra, or Toussaint Louverture, leader of the insurgents of Santo Domingo; and the country's political image, considered one of the most peaceful states in a region beset by political turbulence in which there is strong competition, particularly as regards mobilising investment.

It should be remembered that since Benin is still a developing country, its strategy is aimed first and foremost at economic development. But in addition to promoting the country as an economic destination, the government seeks to attract tourists from different sources. In a region where countries have several similar characteristics, branding appears to be a compelling strategic tool to strengthen the country's competitiveness (Foroudi et al., 2016). The Beninese approach differs fundamentally from those prevailing in Western contexts. The first difference is that Western states have a more established international reputation (Foroudi et al., 2016) and stronger credibility, making it easier for them to attract investors and tourists. The second difference relates to the availability of infrastructure in Western contexts: hence the importance of development projects in the Beninese strategy rather than an approach focused more strongly on branding aspects. Furthermore, political power has a strong influence in Benin. All projects are government inspired and are implemented by ministries and/or specialised government agencies. Most of these agencies are under the hierarchical and functional supervision of the presidency of the republic, which acts as the driving force.

In conclusion, the GAP 2016–2021 "Revealing Benin" is more a programmatic document, outlining the government's ambitions and orientations in terms of economic, place, cultural, artistic, and tourist development, than a branding strategy

for the country. However, it functions as a brand by laying the foundations not only for the country's economic development but also for Benin's attractiveness as an economic and tourist destination. This is the beginning of the definition of a place brand for the country. Substantial marketing, promotion, and visibility measures are taken on an episodic basis by the government to attract investment, tourists, experts, and sports and/or music stars. Television programmes have been produced and broadcast on major international channels such as National Geographic, TF1, and France 2. In addition, events such as summer festivals are now being increasingly organised to attract great artists to the country.

Notes

- 1 The ARISE group has developed a special economic zone in Gabon and the industrial platform in Togo.
- 2 Extract from an intervention by Romuald Wadagni, Benin's minister of state in charge of the economy and finance, in the "Grand Format" TV broadcast on the French channel TF1 in 2022.

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Part IV

Strategy and evaluation

While a place is neither a product nor a service, it needs to be managed. Place management relates to the development, coordination, and implementation of public policies. In the case of urban regeneration, Brorström and Willems (2023) write that projects always encompass various policies, such as mobility, housing, or social welfare. Good place management is thus essential, since a place cannot be attractive if the very foundations of its development are absent or inconsistent. When a place does not take the necessary steps to guarantee a certain harmony in terms of urban planning (scattered hotel construction) or mobility (uncoordinated public-transport system), it will certainly experience great difficulty in promoting sustainable tourism activity in the long run. In this regard, Oliveira (2015, p. 18) explains that place branding can be used as an instrument for spatial planning but that it should be included in wider strategic thinking to “shape and frame what a place is and what it aims to become”. Therefore, managing places and designing attractiveness strategies require strategic thinking, especially regarding the target groups defined by the place.

The particularity of place branding and marketing is that they are aimed at specific target groups (rather than the population as a whole), as detailed in Chapter 7. These target groups can be internal (mainly residents and local companies) or external to the area. It is therefore necessary to develop professional marketing and communication approaches while adapting them to the characteristics of a given place. Marketing and communication can relate to endogenous (in the case of internal targets) or exogenous place promotion (in the case of external targets). Part IV consists of two chapters: Chapter 13, which explores how to develop a marketing strategy, including a branding approach, and Chapter 14, which focuses on how to evaluate the measures adopted, and correct the problems identified in the marketing strategy (Figure IV.1).

Generally, any strategy comprises four parts: an analysis part, a decision-making part, a part for selecting the measures and tools to be used, and a final part dedicated to budgeting and the implementation process. Even if these stages are sometimes, in theory, structured in slightly different ways, they must form a coherent whole; otherwise the risk of having an ineffective strategy may occur. This is where the specifics of place management and the characteristics of a city or region itself come into play. A strategy must take into account the nature of the target groups, the concrete possibilities for using certain resources, and the means available to a place. Unlike a private company, which can innovate and launch new

Developing a strategy

Evaluating a strategy

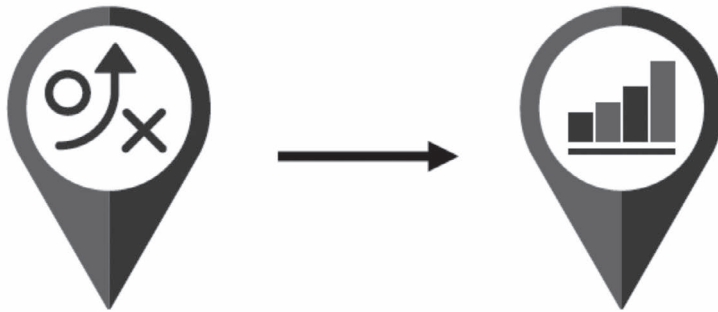


Figure IV.1 Developing and evaluating a strategy for a place

products and services quickly, a place has to “deal with what’s at hand”, taking into account the political situation. For instance, major infrastructure changes often take at least a decade, and political changes with new objectives can undermine the efforts already made. In the UK, Plimmer and Tetlow (2017) write that “barriers to infrastructure improvements are a lack of political vision and long-term strategy”. Chapter 13 covers these elements while respecting the tried-and-tested fundamentals of a marketing strategy.

Place-development strategies are rarely measured in terms of sales or profits. In addition, changes in image or other types of results can only be observed over the long term. Also, it is often impossible to distinguish the effects of certain implemented measures from those of other phenomena or developments. For instance, a country may devote considerable efforts to tourism promotion, but unrest in neighbouring countries or health scandals may undermine these investments. For instance, as explained in Chapter 12, the infrastructure investments made by the Beninese government in the W Natural Park, and the costly efforts to promote the area, have been interrupted by the incursion of violent groups from neighbouring countries. The evaluation of place-promotion strategies must therefore consider the principles of public-policy evaluation and integrate them with those of marketing and communication approaches. This is the aim of Chapter 14.

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13 A strategy for place development



13.1 Introduction

A strategy is basically a simple matter, something akin to preparing for a hiking expedition: one must analyse the situation (examine the map, assess the level of participants), define objectives (destination, stages), plan the route (choose an itinerary, there usually being several of varying difficulty), select instruments to reach the goal (equipment), and set aside resources (reserves of water and food, satellite phone in case of serious difficulty, etc.). This basic or generic approach is equally valid for the strategy of a major private company, for a new product to be launched, for an administration, or for the promotion of a place. But, although the major stages of any strategic process are fundamentally the same, the details of these various stages need to be explored and explained. We present two main approaches: the holistic and the normative approach.

13.2 Holistic approach

There is no single solution or way of presenting the process for developing a branding or marketing strategy for a place. Everything depends on the intention, the desired goal. Two completely different approaches are possible: a holistic approach and a normative approach. A holistic approach consists in looking at the development of a strategy in its entirety, without necessarily ranking all the aspects that need to be considered. Problems are sometimes so complex, with constraints on every side, that it is imperative to address the situation and solutions as a whole. A normative approach differs in that it imposes an order in the manner of managing a problem and coming up with a solution. This reflects a more pedagogical (normative) approach, which is highly useful but calls for a degree of caution because every situation is different and will require some adaptation of planned stages. Figure 13.1 illustrates a holistic conception of the development of a strategy.

This figure highlights the need to take a set of interrelated elements into account. It involves a systemic approach, and therein lies its strength. It also highlights the need for a global understanding of issues and the fact that thought must be given constantly and decisions must be taken repeatedly.

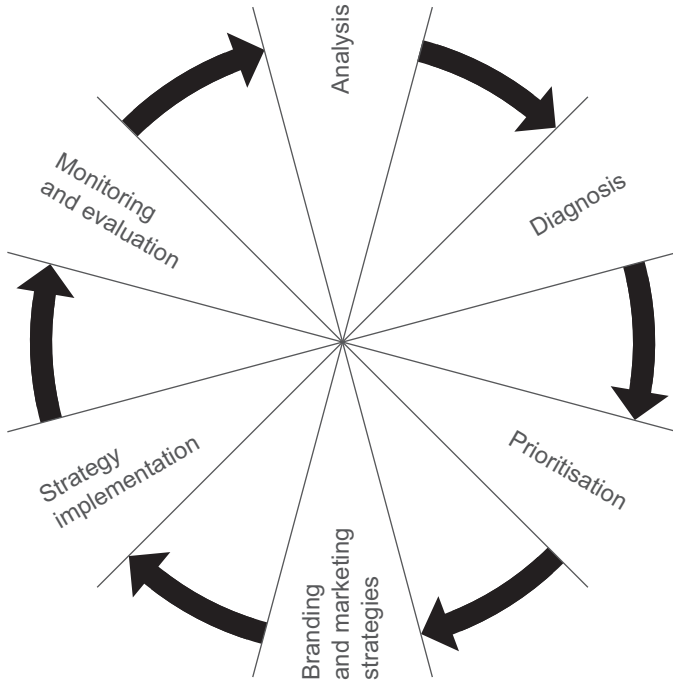


Figure 13.1 The holistic approach to developing a place-marketing strategy

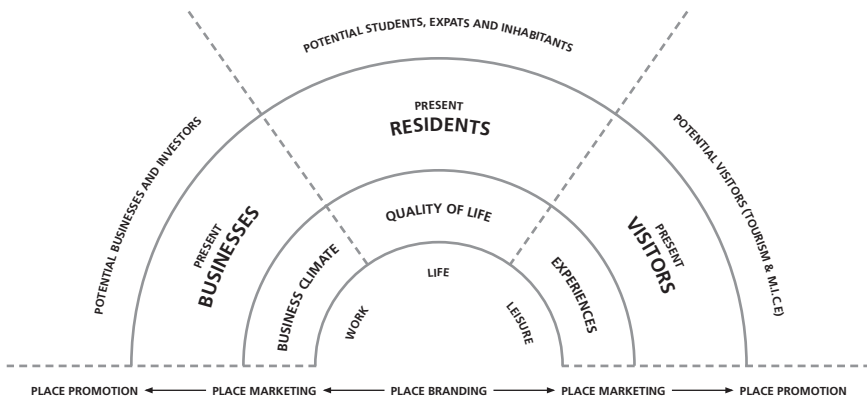


Figure 13.2 Organisational aspects of place promotion, place marketing, and place branding

Source: Boisen et al. (2017, p. 9)

Other, more specific holistic presentations can be found in the literature. That proposed by Boisen et al. (2017) is worthy of note, because it covers all the important components of an integrated approach to places. Place development touches on economic conditions; living conditions; and the capacity for accommodating

businesses, inhabitants, and tourists, both current and potential. Economic attractiveness, quality of life, and tourist infrastructure are seen as elements framing this development.

Although, from a marketing point of view, this representation includes the main elements to be considered in a place-development process, it gives no indication of how to proceed or of the dimensions that need to be taken into account. It also simplifies the complexity of the situation and of interactions between target groups and objectives. For example, a company that is looking for a favourable business climate also has managers and workers whose families are looking for a high quality of life. It is not unusual for businesses to give serious consideration to criteria affecting their workers in their decisions of where to set up. This means that the various target groups and their expectations cannot be considered in isolation: they, and their interactions, must be addressed together. In some major tourist cities, the inflow of outsiders can substantially affect residents' quality of life.

In addition to these target groups, consideration must be given to indirect actors (influencers, journalists, trustees, specialised companies, etc.) and decision-makers from other places whose impact may be crucial, depending on their attitude. It is with good reason that the branding of a place is also aimed at increasing soft power in relations with other places.

13.3 Normative (step-by-step) approach

Before discussing the various stages of a marketing process, it is important to bear in mind some of the principles put forward in this book. First among these is a complementary understanding of place branding and place marketing. While many studies give priority to either of these two concepts, we consider that both must coexist in any process designed to promote a place, as explained in Chapter 4: like any product or service, a place must be known, and a minimum of information about its location and identity must be recognised. What would be the use of promoting a region or city if target groups were completely unaware of it or were unable to recognise any of its attributes or characteristics? Have you heard of the Kapsiki people and the Waza National Park in Cameroon's Extreme North Region? Despite being among Cameroon's features of greatest interest, this people and this park are unknown to most of the world's population—a fact that seems unlikely to change in the near future because of the high level of insecurity currently generated in the region by the activities of Boko Haram. With this example in mind, those responsible for promoting a place should consider their region's notoriety. Although the city of Roubaix in northern France is widely known for its architectural heritage, it is doubtful whether the logo chosen for its promotion (I♥RBX) is easily identifiable and meaningful for people outside the region. For this reason, a well-identified brand appropriate for a place's identity, together with all its graphical and textual representations (logo, colour codes, baseline, etc.), are essential and must be promoted. But generally, they are not sufficient. The fact that a region is known does not mean that businesses will want to set up there, that people will include a visit in their leisure travel plans, or indeed that people will want to move

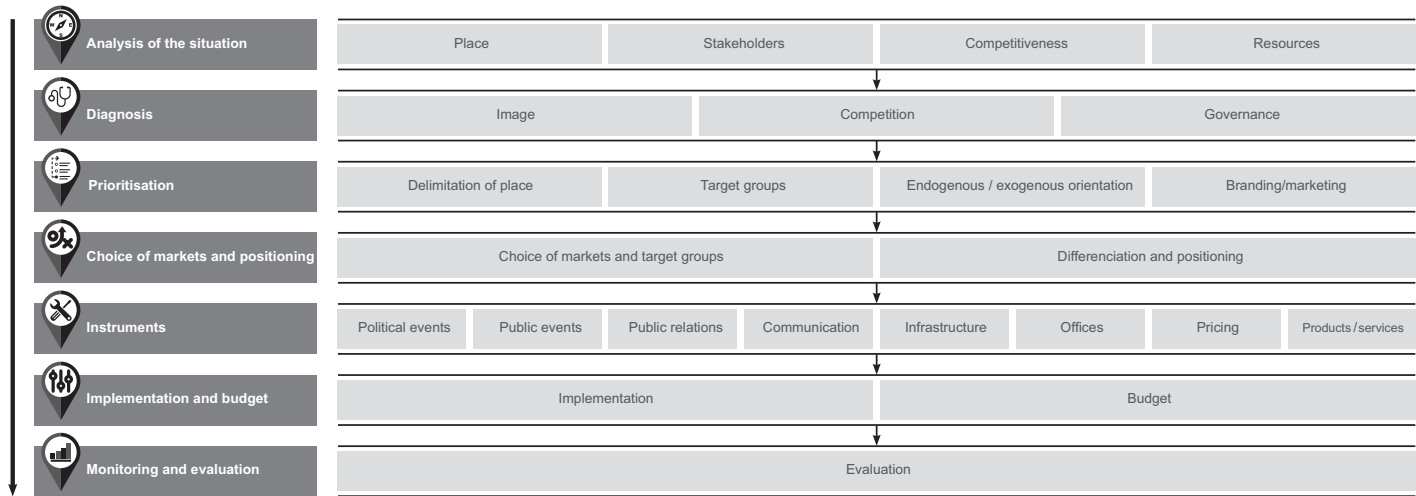


Figure 13.3 Process for formulating a place-development strategy

there. Concrete steps must be taken and offers must be made because businesses, just like tourists and potential future residents, can often choose between a number of regions or cities. As a result, having a brand is not enough. Specific marketing tailored to target groups is essential.

The second principle put forward in this book consists in developing a process that is valid for all places. Here again, the literature abounds in examples of the creation or development of brands known worldwide (I♥NY in New York) or regionally (OnlyLyon in Lyon, France, Iamsterdam in Amsterdam, Netherlands), but most of the world's cities and regions have neither these places' attributes nor their notoriety (see, for example, Zenker and Braun, 2017). What is needed, then, is a process that can be applied to the great majority of situations. This means taking into account a large number of dimensions and criteria and providing examples in widely differing situations.

The third and last principle is the necessity not to overlook political institutions and public policies when developing strategies for places, as mentioned in Part 1 of this book. Strategic decisions on promoting places (construction of infrastructure, creation of interregional structures, budgets, appointing managers, etc.) are not taken by autonomous, semi-privatised agencies with decisional freedom but by elected political bodies. Although economic-promotion agencies may enjoy some margin for manoeuvre, mainly in the choice of priority objectives and in more operational aspects, decisions lie with elected authorities. The decisions taken by these authorities touch on public policies on culture, mobility, the economy, or education, which must be coordinated at the territorial level (see Chapter 2). Place strategies, whether focused on developing the brand or aimed at specific marketing objectives for target groups, are generally validated by political bodies or by managers appointed by these bodies. As a result, it must be realised that decision-making processes often differ between businesses, with their classical marketing/branding approach, and public agencies or administrations. These differences generally manifest in the time needed to make decisions, in the number of persons or bodies involved, or in difficulties in coordinating measures planned in the strategy. Figure 13.3, based on preceding chapters, presents the procedure for developing a branding and marketing strategy for a place.

13.4 The detailed strategic process

The literature suggests several processes or frameworks for strategy development (see, for example, Bonakdar and Audirac, 2020; Meyronin, 2015; Chamard, 2014). The process proposed here is made up of six main parts (see Kühn and Pasquier, 2016): analysis of the situation, diagnosis, prioritisation, determination of target groups and objectives, choice of instruments, and implementation with an estimate of resources required.

Analysis of the situation

Clearly, the situation must be analysed before any decision is taken. The analysis may be relatively simple when existing procedures are well established and well

documented and there is a general consensus among all the public and private partners concerned. Conversely, it may prove very long and complex if the procedure is new, the region's identity is poorly defined, positioning in relation to competitors is vague, or actors are not aligned with the general objectives that have been set. In some tourist regions, conflicts may arise between on the one hand hotel companies who wish to maintain a massive clientele and who fill up hotels having hundreds of rooms with all-included packages and on the other hand associations of local residents and merchants who would like to see sustainability criteria taken into account, a reduction of nuisances, and greater integration of the local economy in tourist promotion. Another quite frequent conflict may arise between political authorities who insist on results in terms of businesses coming to set up in a region and creating jobs, while the agency in charge of the task, from whom rapid results are expected, would first like to have greater resources to publicise the region. There are many similar examples.

In line with the preceding chapters, four fields of analysis can be distinguished:

The first concerns the territory itself: the question does not arise in the case of a country-level initiative, for example, when developing a strategy for a pavilion in a world's fair. However, the question becomes more complicated when a region seeks to promote itself to attract new businesses. If the region is delimited too narrowly, it will often have few resources, of which a considerable part must first be used to raise awareness of the region among remote audiences. If the delimitation is too broad, the region will face potential conflicts between various municipalities who will accuse the promoter of having favoured one place over another in the same region when a new business sets up shop. Delimitation is often done in a historical, political, or institutional manner. It may be necessary to call delimitation into question or envisage a number of levels of delimitation for a region based on functional borders (e.g., living area or economic clusters) or target groups, since tourist promotion can be delimited differently from economic promotion.

The second field to be explored concerns the place's competitiveness and attractiveness. As discussed in Chapter 3, competitiveness and attractiveness must be considered complementary, since two nearby places may be very attractive without being competitors and, conversely, two other places may have attractiveness problems and compete with each other head-on. A place's attractiveness is mainly based on inherent characteristics that it can highlight in a branding and marketing process. A place may be very attractive for all three main areas, or target groups, of place-development strategies: residents, businesses, and tourists. This is, however, quite rare. Very often, a place will exert a degree of attraction for one or other of the target groups and have difficulty keeping or attracting the others. In some cities that are very attractive to leisure tourists and/or business tourists, with the strong growth in the number of apartments rented out for short-term stays, traditional residents are being squeezed out, since they can no longer find reasonably priced accommodation.

Competitiveness necessarily refers to other places that are competing for one or more target groups. Here again, competitiveness may cover all areas or be limited to one target group. Some major cities obviously seek to support tourism and to

retain and attract residents, particularly those with a certain amount of purchasing power, as well as businesses offering attractive jobs. In some cases, the analysis of competition must be carried out for each area, because competitors of a city such as Zurich are not the same for business tourism and for the setting up of new businesses. Google opened a research centre in Zurich that now employs over 5000 people, in part because a Swiss national proposed the idea (by chance), but mainly because of the presence of reputable academic institutions (the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology—ETH Zurich), the quality of life and the existence of high-quality infrastructure, the proximity of an airport, and lower income tax than in other countries (attractiveness factors). As regards cities or regions that could have been in competition with Zurich in this case, European cities (tech hubs such as London, Berlin, Paris, Stockholm, or Amsterdam) and Asian cities such as Singapore and Seoul would certainly be among the candidates. As for business tourism, however, competition would not necessarily come from the same cities. For the hosting of congresses, business meetings, seminars, or conferences, competition could come from more regional candidates such as Basel, Geneva, Munich, Frankfurt, and so on. Generally, three types or levels of competition can be distinguished:

- direct competition;
- indirect competition;
- substitute or replacement competition.

These terms are self-explanatory. Direct competition is that in which the offering is similar. In conference tourism, numerous cities and regions offer comparable infrastructure (hospitality, hotel accommodation, transport, and culture and leisure). Indirect competition is provided by places that answer the same need but in a different way. Instead of choosing a major city, an organisation could decide to hold its congress or conference in a mountain resort. While transport time will certainly be longer and the number of people who could be hosted may be reduced, participants' experience will be different. The last of the three types is replacement competition. In a normal state of affairs, it does not exist, but it may arise unexpectedly or following a crisis. The COVID crisis provides a striking example. Once lockdown was imposed in most countries and possibilities for travel were very restricted, many businesses and organisations turned to videoconferencing applications, which developed substantially and became readily available to all in a very short time. Although in the circumstances there was little choice but to adopt this solution so that people could continue discussing, once the crisis was over many organisations decided to continue holding their conferences entirely or partially by video, or in a hybrid form. As a result, major traditional conference-organising infrastructures are suffering from reduced demand and are obliged to face up to this form of competition, which was barely on their radar prior to the crisis.

The third area involves resources that are available or could be mobilised. Places' ambitions often play an important role when development strategies are formulated. However, it is rare that places have access to virtually unlimited resources, like those deployed by Qatar in recent years to develop its brand and organise

world events. Very often, and as the example of cities such as Liège (Box 3.3) or Ghent (Box 4.2) shows, resources in terms of persons and financial means are limited and must be used sparingly. In these circumstances, it is worth seeing whether complementary resources can be garnered by associating with other stakeholders. Such is the case in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, where the brand manager gets extra support for major projects by requesting additional resources from public bodies or seeks volunteer support with the help of ambassadors of the place, who publish posts on social media or take part in promotional events (see Box 13.1).

Box 13.1 The Mississauga Brand story

One of the most populous Canadian municipalities, Mississauga is a city located in the province of Ontario, on the shores of Lake Ontario. Mississauga has grown into a thriving municipality within one of North America's largest regions that also includes Canada's largest city, Toronto. In this regard, it is worth noting that Mississauga is home to the country's largest airport, Pearson International Airport. The city has attracted residents from around the world, which has created a population that is very multicultural, including many residents of Asian origin, but also "visible minorities" (e.g., people from Latin America). The diversity of religion and languages spoken also characterises the city. As one of the most diverse cities in the world, many cultural and entertaining events are held in Mississauga annually, celebrating the diverse cultures represented in the city.

For most readers, Mississauga will very likely be perceived as part of Toronto. This is why, acknowledging the strength of Toronto as a brand internationally, place-marketing efforts are deployed for a larger geographical area, which encompasses the cities of Toronto and Mississauga at its centre (the Greater Toronto Area). For example, a structure called Toronto Global is in charge of economic promotion and attracting investments to the area. The city of Mississauga noted the strategic need to differentiate itself as a municipality. It has attracted multiple big corporations that have established their global or Canadian head offices in Mississauga. These companies cover sectors that range from life sciences to banking, aerospace, transportation, or equipment industries. The city has become an aircraft development hub—the largest by employment in Canada—with Canadian headquarters of global aerospace companies.

Based on this assessment of the situation, the city launched a reflection ("brand audit") about developing a brand for promoting the city and set up a team dedicated to this project. The project started with the identification of other cases and best practices internationally. The second phase focused on the involvement of 23 key community stakeholders through one-to-one interviews. This engagement process was then extended, in a

subsequent phase, to other groups (500 Mississauga residents and 100 small businesses). The fourth phase gathered a “Brand advisory panel” that met in four workshops to define what they considered the ten building blocks of the city brand, which was then narrowed to three to four main themes and finally to three pillars. The fifth phase aimed at developing and gaining feedback for the new logo and visual identity, which was presented to various stakeholders. These stakeholders first indicated that the old logo did not represent the city Mississauga is today. Eventually, the new logo was validated with focus groups and then got approval internally (i.e., by the city government).

Apart from the arts and cultural scene, which is quite vibrant in Mississauga, the three pillars of the city brand are:

- A welcoming culture that represents the diversity of the city (approximately 140 languages spoken);
- A naturally enriching experience (high quality of life);
- A city full of inspiring possibilities (with a strong economic base, as approximately 70 company headquarters are located in Mississauga).

The Mississauga brand is managed by a small team that reports directly to the city manager. In North American cities, a city manager is usually an official appointed as the administrative manager of a city. In Mississauga, the brand manager works in the Strategic Communications and Initiatives Division within the city manager’s office. Established in 2020, this division focuses on strategic planning, city building, opportunities related to place-making development, and partnerships that support the city’s growth. Therefore, the main goal is to foster inclusion and concentrate on economic-development efforts that especially target the most promising areas.

While the city brand manager has a leading role regarding the tasks related to the brand (consistency, promotion, communication), they collaborate with other project managers and leaders in the city administration. The structure that supports their work is decentralised, and the city brand manager’s team works closely with other departments, as there are, for example, marketers employed in other sections of the city. The brand manager’s team is small and runs on a limited budget (that can be expanded for large projects), but it can set priority actions, propose ideas and projects, and contribute to the city’s strategic plans.

The main tasks of the city brand manager’s team focus on defining the macro vision for the brand and ensuring brand alignment with all stakeholders. The regular projects include brand research, in a way that is similar to what is conducted in many other places (to get information about the brand and orient the actions). In this regard, a survey is sent to citizens every two years. Other key tasks include creating personas for the brand and making sure that innovation is part of the brand as Mississauga.

The main goal is to ensure that all stakeholders speak with a common and similar voice that sticks to the values defined for the brand. This imperative also requires a sustained dialogue with stakeholders outside the city administration, especially private companies (e.g., businesses located in Mississauga) and the big players in the city's economic development (e.g., the airport, colleges and universities). It is essential for stakeholders to be in line with the core characteristics of the brand:

- Open and engaging (welcoming and supportive attitude);
- Effective (getting things done and focusing on solutions);
- Vibrant (colourful and dynamic);
- Collaborative (open to partnerships and co-creation);
- Optimistic (future-oriented and positive mentality).

The concerns about talking with a similar voice are essential for the marketing and communication campaigns launched by the city. In terms of marketing and communication, awareness and positivity campaigns serve both to improve Mississauga's image and distinguish it from Toronto and surrounding cities. These efforts are assessed through surveys (for instance, surveys about awareness that focus on "top of mind" associations) and quantitative indicators, such as night overstay. Other marketing tools include social media platforms for communication and brand activation through tourism and culture.

The main challenges faced by the city regard funding, as already mentioned by several brand managers in other parts of the world. Marketing and place-making efforts require appropriate levels of stable funding. With marketing costs continuing to increase, and stakeholders' demands growing as well, additional funding is often needed. However, in times of crisis, and when resources are constrained, it can be difficult to secure additional funding. Another problem relates to the magnitude of the external forces that have a direct influence on attractiveness, especially the recent COVID-19 pandemic but also other macroeconomic factors, such as global financial challenges and housing affordability, which are impacting cities around the world. This puts a lot of pressure on the consistency of the brand, which relies on factors that can be severely affected by these external factors. For instance, supporting tourism and development during but also after the pandemic has proven to be difficult for the city.

Box written in collaboration with David Ferreira,
brand manager for the city of Mississauga.
More information: <http://mississaugabrand.ca/>.

Last, the fourth area involves governance and stakeholder involvement (see Chapter 6). A place is not the property or exclusive domain of a single actor. Its particular identity is the combined result of the region's inhabitants, institutions, businesses, and associations. Because of a number of factors—the need to coordinate with public policies, public-sector decisional processes, the number of stakeholders and their expectations—the governance of places' promotional activities is frequently complex and demands careful analysis. In particular, each stakeholder must be identified, and its intentions, objectives, and resources must be known. Its decision-makers must also be identified, together with existing interactions between them. It is worth remembering that hierarchy—the basic operating principle of organisations—frequently plays no role in place-promotion agencies, which are obliged to work in a networking mode, with all the ensuing advantages and disadvantages.

Diagnosis

A diagnosis (or place audit), as can be understood by analogy with the world of medicine, consists in identifying the problems a region suffers from or, if the “patient” is in good health, taking preventive measures to avoid any deterioration in its health. In some cases, arriving at a diagnosis is a simple matter. Here are some examples: in the wake of an economic crisis, a region suffers from greatly insufficient taxation income; heightened competition in the conference and exhibition market means that certain major infrastructures constructed by public bodies can no longer be operated profitably; climate change and a fall in the number of snow days no longer allow certain ski stations to offer attractive conditions in winter; a city receives an inflow of tourists for very short stays. More often, however, the diagnosis is more complex and multidimensional: a region suffers from an image deficit and an exodus of young people and highly skilled persons who cannot find a work situation that suits their profile; a big company arrives in a region, triggering small-business closures and a structural fall in wages for part of the population (“the Walmart effect”); an absence of coordination between the various actors of place promotion and low resources that are not pooled leads to a multiplicity of brands, names, and logos and hence dilution or confusion in terms of image.

One of the challenges of establishing a diagnosis lies in getting agreement from all stakeholders (who, let us remember, often do not have the same constraints or the same goals) about which problems should be addressed. Thus, if a diagnosis cannot be established or fails to achieve a degree of consensus among stakeholders, it will then be difficult to establish priorities in terms of a marketing strategy. This means that it is necessary to take the time to discuss the problems identified and even, when necessary, to conduct analyses in greater depth to ensure that the main stakeholders are on the same page.

Table 13.1 shows the criteria and dimensions to be taken into account.

Table 13.1 Criteria and dimensions to be taken into account in analysing the situation

<i>Place</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Competition/attractiveness</i>	<i>Governance</i>
Geographical, cultural, and political features	Human and financial resources	Position of the city or region in the world (cf. Chapter 5)	Stakeholders' involvement
Values shared by the community	Specific features of the place	Neighbours (e.g., Toronto for Mississauga)	Rules
Contours of identity		Levels of competition Attractiveness factors	Tools/processes used in decision-making

The diagnosis will of course be based on elements in the analysis and the ensuing discussions. If necessary, and depending on the complexity of the situation, the diagnosis can be constructed around three axes:

- An “image” axis (us as an identity) based on the contours of identity, values shared by the community, and the vision of what the place should be in the medium and long term;
- A “competition” axis (us in relation to others) focused on the advantages or characteristics to be highlighted in relation to other territories we are in competition with (what do we want to emphasise that will characterise and differentiate us from others?);
- A “governance” axis (us together) that must show how all stakeholders can act jointly to address territorial-promotion issues, decide on a consensus basis, and prioritise.

The example presented in Box 13.2, which shows the architecture of the Peru brand, is interesting because it shows the types of use according to target groups.

Box 13.2 The semiotic dimensions of Marca Perú

Semiotics, as a study of meaningful processes and phenomena, offers tools to help marketing and brand-management specialists, whose objectives are always focused on meaning: how to make an offering or brand meaningful with the aim of ensuring an organisation's long-term survival.

In the field of *place* and *nation branding*, semiotics can play a role in developing or analysing concepts for products (new tourist attractions), services (advice for investors), and advertising (promoting an asset or a meaning to be conveyed to target audiences). It can explain or suggest choices of logos, insights, storytelling, and strategic positioning. Last, it can help in understanding or clarifying brand portfolios, as we shall see in the case of the nation branding of Peru: Marca Perú.

Marca Perú, a singular nation brand

Marca Perú was launched in 2011 at a time of strong economic growth in Peru. Created by PromPerú, an agency of the Department of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR), Marca Perú displays three characteristics, all semiotic, that make it unique in the global nation-brand landscape.

1. The first of these characteristics is that Marca Perú was unveiled as part of an advertising campaign aimed not at tourists and foreign investors but at Peruvian citizens (campaign: Peru, Nebraska; agency: Young & Rubicam Perú. For a study of this campaign, see Palacios Sialer, 2019). The objective was twofold: on the one hand, to make Peruvians aware of and believe in their unique strengths (Inca past, Creole, Andean and Amazonian folklore, rich gastronomy, entrepreneurial spirit) and, on the other hand, to urge them to act, formally or informally, as good ambassadors, hosts, and partners for foreign tourists and investors. Thus, by using Marca Perú for “internal communication” purposes aimed at bringing Peruvians “on board”, PromPerú offered them new horizons of meaning, in terms both of their own lifestyle and of the place that Peru occupies, or should occupy, in the world (Cánepa Koch and Lossio Chavez, 2019).
2. Although it is of course illusory to assume that Peruvians might feel duty-bound to be loyal to Marca Perú, the fact remains that this internal communication drive paid off,¹ first because the brand, thanks to its unique logo (a signature, unlike those of other nation brands) today enjoys spectacular visibility: anywhere in Lima or in the provinces, one sees the symbol on every kind of platform, especially informal ones (shop fronts, clothing and accessories, souvenirs, sundry products, etc.). This gives the brand a very high profile. Last, Marca Perú has a strongly positive image, one that makes Peruvians proud of their country (82% favourable opinion in 2019).² In short, while Marca Perú does not rank highly among nation brands (37th place in the 2019 Future Brand Country Index rankings, 12 places up on the 2014 rankings),³ it has proven to be one of the very few nation brands that could claim to be a “lovemark” (Roberts, 2005)—so much so that the Marca Perú logo often competes with the official Peruvian crest as a national emblem.
3. The third characteristic of the Marca Perú nation brand lies in the fact that over the years it has become a “house of brands” (Aaker, 2004)—meaning that PromPerú has turned some Marca Perú product-services into brands. “Brands” must be understood as services that have not only a name and a logo but above all a particular vision (Perusset, in press). Dubbed “sectoral brands”,⁴ these brands are: Alpaca del Perú (2014, promoting alpaca fibre), Perú Textiles (2016, promoting fashion and handcrafted textiles), Super Foods Peru (2017, promoting the products of Peruvian agriculture and fishing), Cafés del Perú (2018, promoting the coffee sector), Pisco

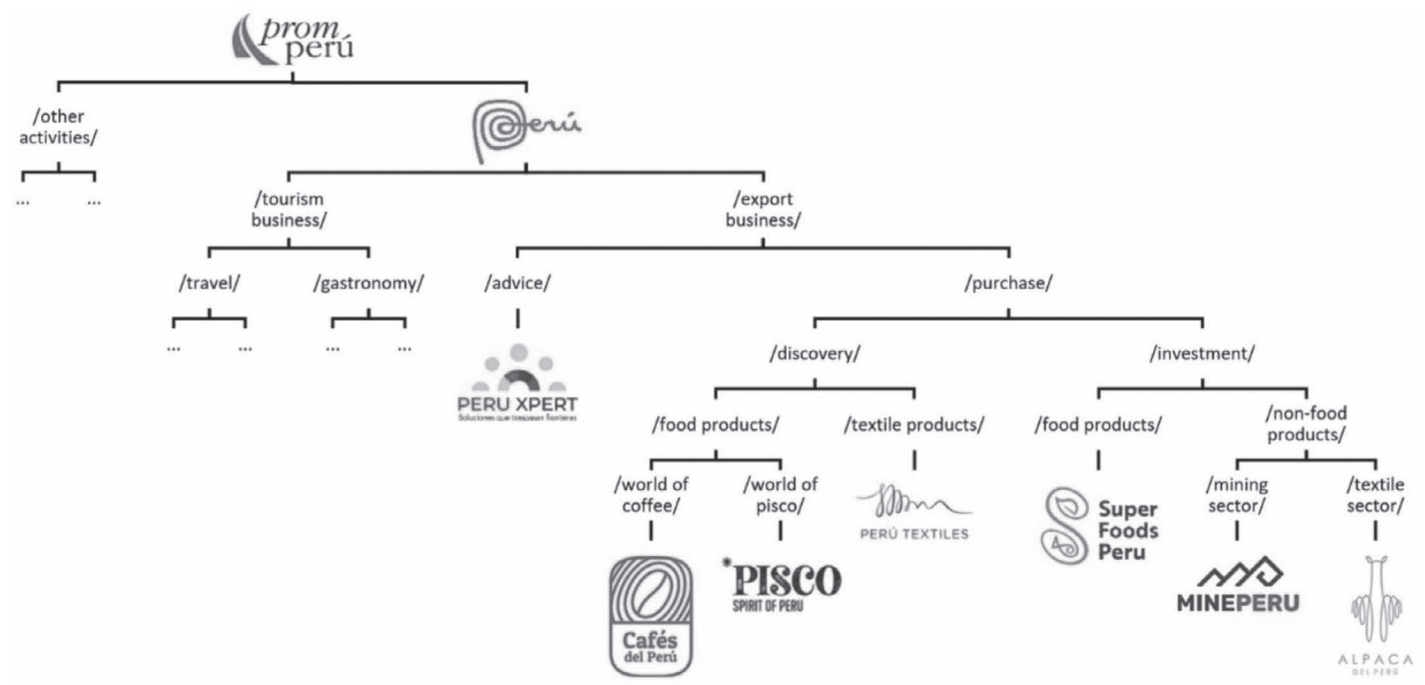


Figure 13.4 Suggested brand portfolio for Marca Perú

Source: provided by Alain Perusset

Spirit of Peru (2019, promoting the production and consumption of pisco), Peru Xpert (2020, helping Peruvian businesses and entrepreneurs to export their products), and Mine Peru (2021, promoting the Peruvian mining industry).

Semiotics as a strategic positioning tool

Semiotics can offer organisations and businesses a powerful method of organising brand portfolios by making it easier to establish brand architecture. As Figure 13.4 shows, semiotics suggests a dual branching between brands and services inside an organisation, allowing the specific nature of each activity to be grasped. Moreover, it requires that classification be done by level of relevance if there are to be no breaks in meaning. That is to say that brand managers must always ask what the most meaningful way is of positioning their products. In accordance with these structural principles, the portfolio of PromPerú (and of Marca Perú) is shown in Figure 13.4.

The benefit of a semiotic tree diagram is that it provides a basis for new marketing or brand-management activities. Suffice it to mention the two following points:

1. Note that Marca Perú takes on two main functions. One, it acts as a master brand for promoting Peruvian tourism; two, it acts as a guarantor brand in most export fields (regularly shown alongside sectoral brand logos in their communications).
2. In the field of exports, three types of offerings emerge, each aimed at a specific audience: consulting for Peruvian exporters; discovery for discerning consumers of fine, genuinely Peruvian products (coffee, pisco, and fashion); and last return for investors interested in the country's major raw materials (mining products, foodstuffs, and textiles).

Each level of the graphic thus testifies to a strategic choice and priority. Here the “offering types” (consulting, discovery, investment) are considered more relevant criteria than “sectors of activity”, which is why textile sectoral brands are found in separate branches (Perú Textiles and Alpaca del Perú).

Box written by Alain Perusset.

Prioritisation

One of the greatest difficulties encountered in most processes of branding and marketing a place is the setting of priorities. There are two main reasons for this. The first involves the political aspects of these processes. Since elected representatives regularly want to present their track record with an eye on the next elections

(generally every four or five years), they need to be able to show results, depending on the areas of public policy for which they are responsible. But political time and business time are not the same. We know from experience that it takes years, and sometimes decades, to construct a new brand, construct or promote the dimensions of a place's identity, and improve the offering to welcome tourists or residents. The results of a strategy with these aims are therefore rarely seen within a four- or five-year term in office. While elected officials aim for concrete results under their political programme that they can highlight, priorities are often aimed at objectives whose measures will be visible (communication, events) but whose scope may be limited. In addition, an elected official has no interest in prioritising various measures of a process unless they match his or her political agenda, the scope of which is often smaller than that of a place strategy. Conversely, if the strategy is in keeping with or complementary to a place's major projects (theatre or museum with an emblematic building such as the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, the Sydney Opera House, the Mucem in Marseille, or the KKL in Lucerne), priorities and objectives will necessarily depend on, or at least be linked to, this project.

The second reason involves the dichotomy and complementarity between place branding and place marketing. As explained in Chapter 4, one can practically never be done without the other. Developing or strengthening a brand without marketing activity is very difficult, and, conversely, deploying marketing activities without the support of an established brand is complicated. The problem that arises stems from the necessity of matching branding and marketing activities with the allocation of available resources, whether financial, human, or territorial.

Figure 13.5 shows four approaches that must be set before establishing a definite strategy. At this stage it is very important to point out that these priorities must be considered not in isolation but with a view to determining a hierarchy of objectives, since obviously it is impossible, for reasons of resources and time, to seek to attain all objectives at once. Ideally, the four priorities are to be dealt with in the order shown, but what is most important is to ensure that these four central dimensions are coherent and that none is isolated from the others. The success of the strategy will depend much more on the coherence of the various decisions taken than on any specific priority.

The first priority or dimension to be considered concerns the delimitation of the territory. Although this issue often appears straightforward, particularly when the strategy is being developed at the national level, it is worth taking the time to think about the territory in question and, where applicable, to consider delimiting it differently. It might be in the interests of some peripheral regions to associate themselves with a territory with particular attractiveness or notoriety. Ticino, an Italian-speaking canton of Switzerland, not far from Milan, is part of the Greater Zurich Area (GZA) regarding exogenous economic promotion. International recognition of the GZA and the attractiveness of the Zurich region give Ticino a degree of visibility on the main foreign markets that it could not realistically attain independently. On the other hand, as regards tourism promotion, Ticino has its own organisation and acts independently of other regions. Depending on the previously established diagnosis, one or more regional delimitations will be necessary.

The second dimension to be considered concerns the main target groups. Here again, it is inappropriate to take an exclusive approach, focusing on one target group to the detriment of others: instead, one or a limited number of target groups should be prioritised. Depending on the established diagnosis, the strategy will aim at attracting or developing businesses, residents, current or future, or tourists. More rarely, but increasingly, strategies will target opinion leaders in other regions and other countries. When the Chinese government publishes full-page “Echoes of China” infomercials resembling editorials in leading world newspapers, the aim is to reach the readers of these publications, who are mainly opinion leaders, rather than the population as a whole.

The third dimension, which is found only occasionally in strategic reflections on place marketing, concerns the endogenous or exogenous orientation of activities. Until recently, the main purpose of place marketing has been to attract new businesses, new residents, or tourists to a region. This is an exogenous development approach. Although similar objectives obviously remain essential for many countries, regions, or cities, different conceptions of place promotion have emerged. Rather than aiming at new target groups, territorial actors focus on businesses and people in the region. This is a matter of concentrating efforts on developing existing businesses and improving the quality of life of residents, extending as far as the implementation of new methods of participation.⁵ If these objectives are attained, the territory will not need much in the way of outward-focused activities, on the one hand because its development will be assured endogenously and on the other because its attractiveness for external actors will naturally be higher. Here again, the two types of development are complementary and should not be regarded as conflicting. Instead, one avenue should be prioritised over the other, with a possible change after a period of time and an assessment.

Finally, discussion on whether to prioritise either the creation or promotion of a place brand and/or identity, or the deployment of marketing activities, a theme to which we return repeatedly in this book, constitutes the fourth dimension. The diagnosis, together with the intentions of the region’s stakeholders, should make it possible to set this priority, which is necessary in order to then develop a concrete strategy.

One thing is certain: seeking to cover several territories at once, and all endogenous and exogenous target groups, while developing a strong brand and marketing activities is a mistake. Not only will resources be insufficient, but it will be very difficult to give coherence to a strategy aimed at so many objectives. What is needed is to define a number of parallel strategies that will be coordinated.

Case 1 is typical of a country that finds it has an image or notoriety deficit, or the components of its identity are seen negatively. The most recent case is that of Qatar. Since the beginning of the century, the country has invested substantial resources in making itself known, mainly through sports diplomacy. It hosted the Asian Games in 2006, bought the Paris Saint-Germain football club in 2010, hosted numerous sports events (Road Cycling World Championships, FIM Moto Racing World Championships, WTA Tour Tennis Championships, etc.), and hosted the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Although the chief target group is obviously the world

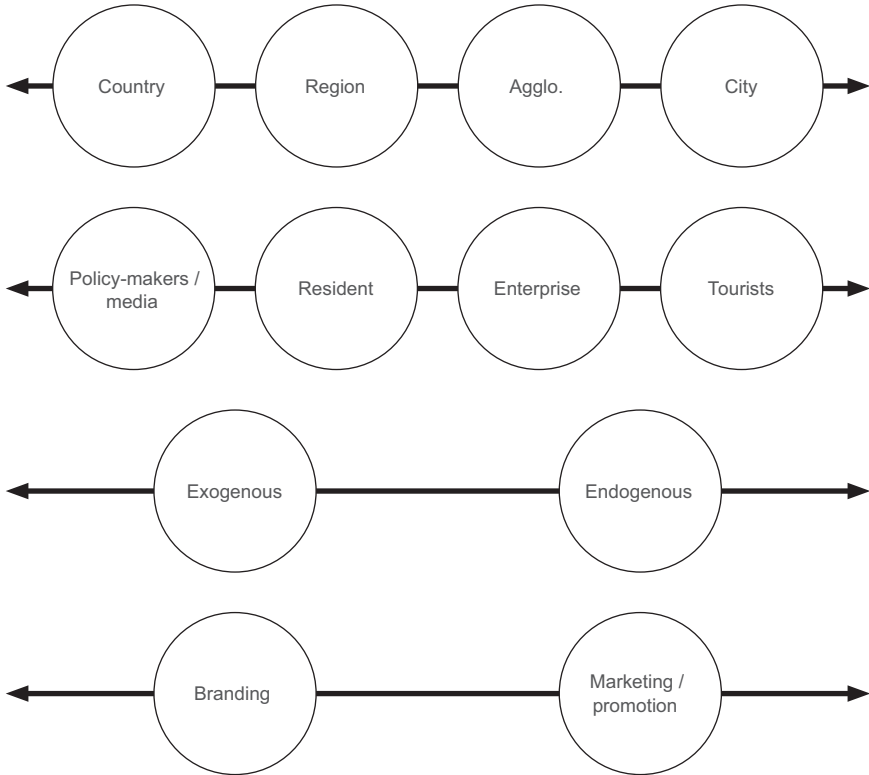


Figure 13.5 Dimensions of strategic prioritisation of place promotion

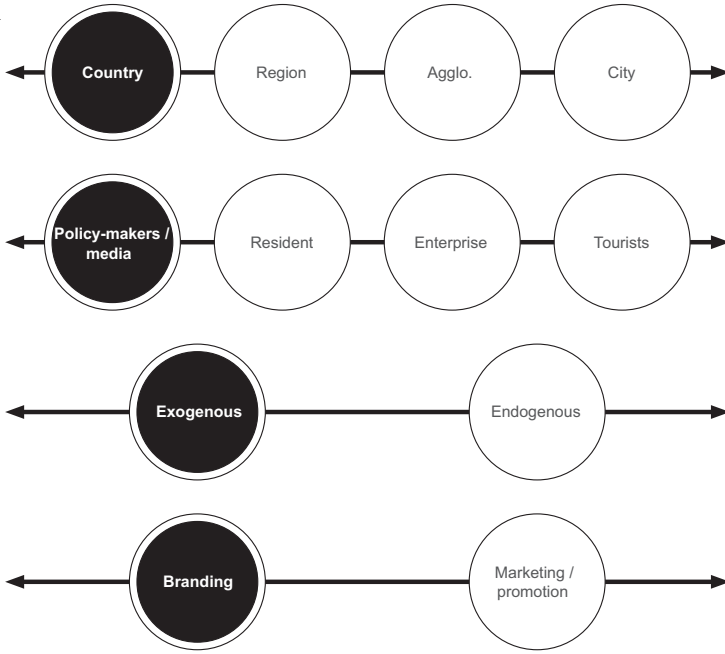
population, political and economic elites in the media are also closely targeted so that a positive image can develop to help Qatari investors in order to reduce their dependency on fossil fuels. As an example, Qatar has an agreement with France exempting it from capital-gains taxes on real estate. While Qatar's main investment has been in making the country known (branding), it has at the same time developed a host of activities to foster tourism in the country (marketing).

Case 2 involves a region's desire to develop its exogenous economic promotion. For example, a region that lacks taxation revenue or is experiencing high levels of unemployment will solicit foreign companies to encourage them to set up in the region. The Italian Trade Agency is the government agency tasked with promoting the country's attractiveness for foreign investment. It has 81 branches in 67 countries.

Case 3 involves tourism promotion. In this case, a city may want to develop exogenous tourism by promoting its brand. This is a classic and relatively long-established case of destination marketing.

Last, Case 4 illustrates the situation of a region wanting to turn first to its own residents. Here, Switzerland provides an interesting example, although one that

Case 1



Case 2

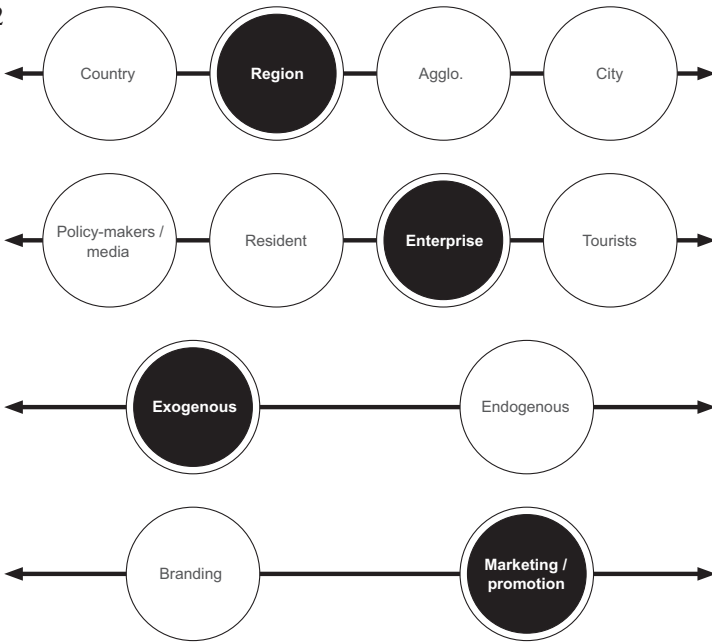
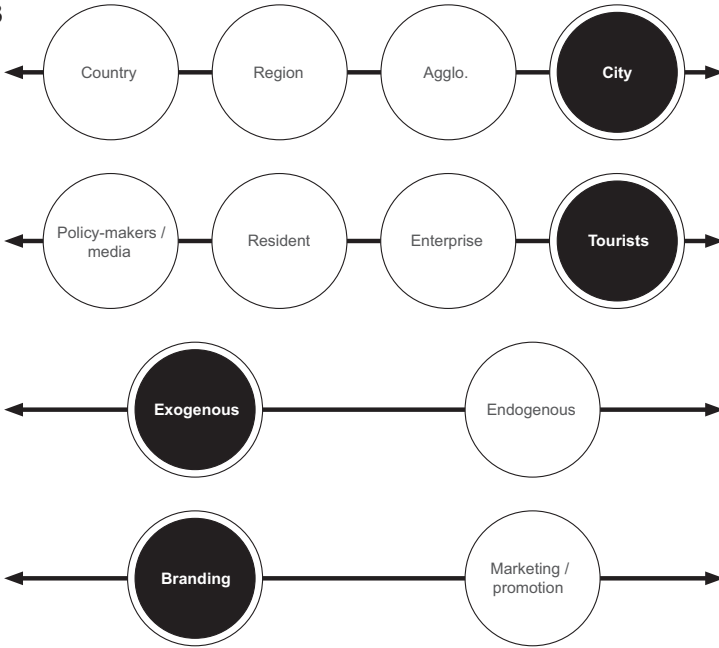


Figure 13.6 Examples of prioritisation

Case 3



Case 4

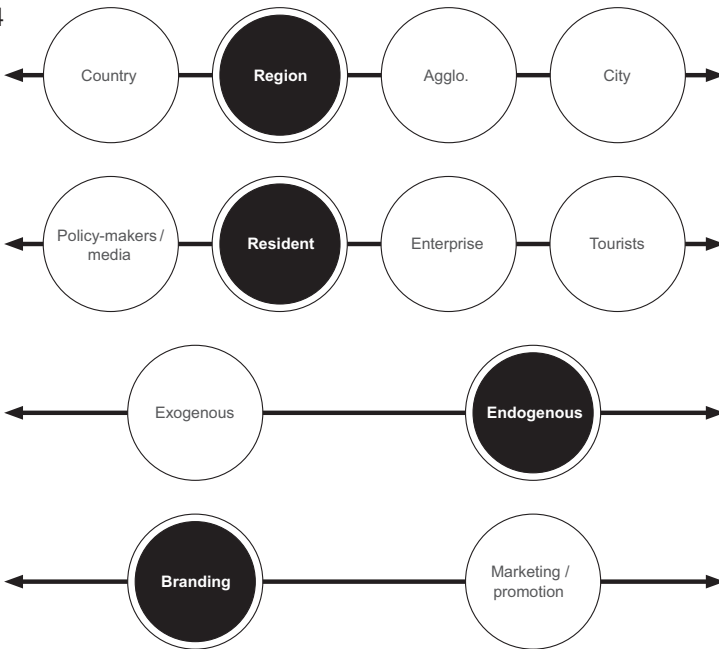


Figure 13.6 (Continued)

does not correspond to the case exactly because it is at the country level. From the 1980s until the early 2000s, a red T-shirt with a white cross (national flag) almost always designated the wearer as holding nationalist and extremist positions. The question of identity reached a peak with the Swiss Pavilion at Seville Expo 92 where a sign proclaimed that “Switzerland doesn’t exist”. Thanks in particular to a national exhibition held in 2002 with numerous exhibits that engaged the public in a playful, innovative way, citizens gradually reclaimed a complex national identity (the country, small and in the heart of Europe, has four national languages, experienced religious wars in the 19th century, and resists concentrations of power, with most sovereign functions remaining within the jurisdiction of regions). As shows in Figure 13.6, through the national exhibition, Switzerland mainly addressed its residents/citizens (endogenous approach) to incite them to adopt or reclaim the national identity. Clearly, numerous marketing activities supported and complemented this objective, which should, however, be viewed as a branding strategy.

As indicated earlier, this does not necessarily call for the setting of a single priority but potentially, rather, a number of priority strategies that complement each other. These might include a strategy to increase awareness of the region and its main features, an endogenous economic-promotion strategy, and a tourist-promotion strategy. Everything depends on the diagnosis, the resources available, and the capacity to adopt a form of governance suited to these objectives. In such a situation, one frequently finds that these various strategies are implemented by specific agencies, with coordination being difficult.

What follows sets out the strategic decisions that need to be taken for each defined priority or group of priorities.

Choice of markets and positioning

The choices of dimensions made in the previous step can result in a great variety of situations. It is possible that a place might decide to adopt a wholly integrated approach with a single brand and a single organisation in charge of all promotional activities, whereas another place may choose approaches that are specific to each problem. Consequently, it is difficult to propose a single detailed strategic process in terms of the choice of markets and positioning. Some decisions must be adapted to the particular situation.

The choice of markets and positioning constitute the classic main decisions of marketing and answer the two following fundamental questions: whom do I wish to reach (specific target groups) and what advantages or what reasons will I put forward to convince businesses or persons to take an interest in the region (unique selling proposition or USP)? Regardless of the public or private organisation or the size of the place, resources are always limited, and deciding means making choices. In Chapter 14, which deals with implementing a strategy, we will see that one of the classic mistakes is failing to ensure a match between objectives and available resources. In other words, the aim in terms of target groups is (too) broad in relation to the costs of the instruments used (communication, travel and events, agencies and representatives, etc.).

In promoting a place, the choice of a market can be looked at in two ways: what places (countries, regions, cities) to aim for and what persons and/or companies to reach out to. Let's take an example. A city wishes to "rejuvenate" its image and ensure that its future development will be sustainable. Political decisions are taken regarding urban-planning changes (new pedestrian neighbourhoods, development of green spaces and leisure, support for the construction of eco-neighbourhoods or the renovation of industrial areas) and mobility (construction of bike paths, restricted access for vehicles with combustion engines, construction of park-and-ride facilities outside the city, etc.). A communication campaign is decided upon and a new logo is created. In terms of promotion, what is the campaign seeking to attain with its communication activities? In what other regions or cities will it organise events or place advertisements? Who are the persons being targeted (young people, journalists, opinion leaders, entrepreneurs)?

The choice of markets and target groups must meet two main criteria. The first criterion is the volume and potential of the market. Take the case of a country that decides to grant tax advantages to high-income persons who agree to become residents: in order to make this measure known and convince people to come, the country will have to present and explain the conditions to wealth managers, trustees, taxation specialists, lawyers, and notaries—all of whom generally advise the wealthy. The country will therefore have to, in order, target countries having a pool of wealthy persons (large fortunes, retirees or future retirees with a good income, professionals able to work remotely), then organise information sessions for all the specialised consultants, and last target persons or families that could be interested via a specific communication. This kind of process for selecting markets and target groups, taking their potential into account, is necessary for long-term success.

The second criterion to take into account is the intensity of the competition. Inevitably, places will find themselves in competition with each other. While the type and level of competition cannot be compared with some hypercompetitive private markets, the fact remains that a business looking to expand or a family choosing a destination for its vacation will pick one place to the detriment of others. Taking the competitive situation into account is therefore necessary to prevent measures taken subsequently getting submerged by all the activities of other territories. Depending on the competitive intensity, a territory may decide not to be active in certain other places or to focus its efforts on ad-hoc measures. Table 13.2. shows a fictitious case of choosing markets and target groups using the example of a measure designed to attract high-income residents.

The more precise the place-development priorities, the simpler it will be to target the persons, businesses, or institutions concerned. This is the case of the example in the preceding table. On the other hand, when priorities are broader, it may be necessary to target more specifically. For this purpose, segmentation of target groups is recommended. Let's take the example of a region with 1 million inhabitants wishing to modernise its image in the eyes of its population and to stimulate greater buy-in to the regional identity (taking pride in living in the region and acting as its ambassadors outside). This is the situation of the fourth case. In such a situation, it is appropriate to prioritise certain target groups, because aspiring to

Table 13.2 Example of the choice of markets and target groups

	<i>Target countries</i>	<i>Targets within countries</i>	<i>Indirect targets within countries</i>	<i>Competitive intensity</i>
Priority 1	Small or medium-sized countries with large family fortunes <u>and</u> high-income retirees or future retirees	Large fortunes and retirees	Trustees Family-office Specialised journalists	High (other countries with similar fiscal measures)
Priority 2	Large countries with family fortunes and high-income retirees	Large fortunes and retirees	Taxation lawyers Wealth managers Specialised journalists	Moderate
Priority 3	Countries with large family fortunes <u>or</u> high-income retirees or future retirees	Mainly retirees or future retirees	Taxation lawyers Wealth managers Specialised journalists	Low to moderate
Priority 4	Countries without many large fortunes where incomes are below average	Large fortunes	Taxation lawyers Wealth managers	Low

reach the entire population at the same time is practically impossible. The example of the Auvergne region (see Box 13.3) illustrates the prioritisation of target groups and the desire to maintain close links with people from the region.

Box 13.3 The Marque Auvergne brand (Auvergne, France)

Located in the centre of France, Auvergne is a former administrative region that included four departments. With more than 2600 years of history, Auvergne is one of the country’s oldest and most renowned regions. In 2014, as part of the French government’s decentralisation project, President Hollande announced a reduction from 22 to 14 metropolitan regions and a plan to merge the Rhône-Alpes and Auvergne regions. This was not well received in Auvergne. A poll showed that 50% of residents did not wish to see their region amalgamated with another, and 77% of the population were afraid of seeing Auvergne disappear. However, the French government remained firm, and the two regions had to comply with the merger decision. It was decided that plenary assemblies of the regional council would be held in Lyon (Rhône-Alpes), while permanent commissions would be held in Clermont-Ferrand (Auvergne). The two presidents of the new large region decided to maintain two departments (1: new digital technologies for the planning and development of rural and mountain areas and 2: agriculture and forestry) at the regional headquarters in Clermont-Ferrand.

In 2017, the Marque Auvergne brand was launched by an association, replacing the former “Auvergne nouveau monde” brand and slogan. The main goals were: first, to create a shared place brand, proud of its strong identity, history, and values, and second, to guarantee Auvergne’s continued existence and increase its visibility both within the new, large Auvergne Rhône-Alpes Region and at the national level. The association includes the four departments of the former Auvergne region and public and private actors (authorities, associations, schools, companies, clubs, etc.). It had over 500 member organisations as of 2023 (100 in 2018), including big players such as Michelin (HQ located in Auvergne) and L’Oréal (Vichy, a French dermo-cosmetic brand that belongs to L’Oréal, is based in Vichy, Auvergne). It also relies on a network of ambassadors: politicians, actors, sportspeople, cooks, and journalists, most of them from Auvergne or natives of the region (“Auvergnats”) living elsewhere. The association’s management team is composed of a president (an economic actor with a two-year rotating mandate), a volunteer board, and three officers: a managing director, a finance manager, and an assistant for events and marketing activities. While companies pay a membership fee to join the association, the annual budget is quite small compared to that of other regions (€ 615,000 for 2023). However, the responsiveness of the team, which has close connections with economic actors and the population, is a strong asset for the Marque Auvergne brand.

The development of the region and the brand is based on the strong attachment that Auvergnats feel towards the region. This loyalty is reflected in the large number of associations of Auvergnats in different European cities. In addition to the brand itself, the region’s marketing is aimed at two target groups: tourists and future residents. Geographically, all activities are focused on France.

The brand runs marketing actions specific to the region with the aims of: 1) supporting a collective effort to promote the place (creation of a brand that elicits identification and pride), 2) standing out (creation of an attractive offer and differentiation), and 3) being noticed through concrete actions that serve the development of the two preceding purposes. In terms of visibility, the association partly relies on ambassadors, who typically sport the *Marque Auvergne* brand in their logo. The “Trophées Auvergne du sport féminin” (Auvergne trophies for women’s sport) were launched in 2022, sponsored by local professional athletes. Small gifts such as stickers and pins are often distributed to members of the association.

Tourism marketing emphasises the prevailing natural environment and a family approach to tourism. The activities promoted are hiking, outdoor activities, and discoveries (such as volcanoes). “Destination Auvergne” includes the Marque Auvergne brand. An action plan covering the four departments has been designed at the national level, in coordination with the Regional Tourist Board. As the region is economically dynamic, with a low unemployment rate, one of the obstacles to further development is the

lack of skilled labour. One of the region's goals is to attract families who are interested in moving from large urban centres to a region that can offer jobs, affordable housing, and a preserved environment. Seventy-five percent of people who come to settle first came to the region on holidays. Due to limited resources, marketing activities are digital based and targeted at major cities such as Paris. A platform ("Auvergne hires") lists available jobs, and the region buys Google ads using keywords such as "telecommuting" or "working in the green" which direct people to this platform. These ads target young families and those living in very large cities. Another measure is that when a company decides not to hire someone who has applied for a position, it will offer to redirect the applicant to an agency that will offer other similar jobs in the region. This way, applications from outside the region will not be lost.

Marketing efforts include the #UpHeros campaign, which consists of events (20–30 per year) dedicated to people or groups with projects that have added value for the region. These events take place in different municipalities and enjoy the support of local volunteers and have attracted hundreds of participants over the past few years. Another target for the brand is customers interested in products made in Auvergne: an online marketplace, *achetezenauvergne.fr* ("Buy in Auvergne"), has been created. In addition, the brand is quite active in the local media and is a member of the *Club de la Presse Auvergne*. At the national level, *Marque Auvergne* works closely with the *Club de la Presse Auvergne* ("Auvergne Press Club"), a network of media decision-makers and journalists of national rank who come from Auvergne (or are especially fond of the region), resulting in a significant increase of media coverage of the region, especially on national television. Finally, a journalist writes online content (80 articles per year) that is relayed by means of a newsletter and shared on social media. This content also serves as a reference and a source for national media. The newsletter, launched in 2022 and published three times per month, had around 40,000 subscribers as of early 2023.

The association's strategy revolves around three axes. First, work on the locals' pride and the feeling of belonging to the region; capitalise on a strong identity and mobilise the people of Auvergne, and involve them in the success of the region. Second, work with and for local businesses, and involve them in promoting Auvergne's assets, its sectors of excellence, and its future development. And third, work on networks that support Auvergne and increase networking opportunities, both at the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and the national levels. All these axes rely on a strong sense of identity and the willingness to work together to find solutions and solve problems. This marks a shift from a purely competitive perspective to greater "co-opetition" (or collaboration in some cases) that should contribute to the region's development—something all actors in Auvergne could benefit from.

Box written in collaboration with Cécile Cubizolle,
managing director of *Marque Auvergne*.
More information: www.auvergne.org/.

A market segment is a group of persons and/or organisations that have specific behaviours and needs that are different from another segment. If a region decides to organise events to promote elements of its identity to the population, it is easy to understand that those aged over 50 will not have the same expectations as those under 30 and that business executives may not take part in the same activities as retirees. What is needed, then, is segmentation—to prioritise the main segments one wants to target and to tailor marketing instruments to each segment. Segmentation and consequent targeting are not designed to exclude persons or businesses but to make it possible to tailor measures in line with expectations of the segments concerned. One difficulty lies in constituting segments: segments that are too broad will be complex to deal with, while segments that are too narrow will consume too many resources for the number of persons reached.

The second decision to be taken concerns positioning or, in other words, how to differentiate oneself from the competition. It is a relatively simple matter, but there are three ways of differentiating oneself, which often overlap:

- Differentiation through objective characteristics or advantages: in this case, offerings differentiate themselves concretely from those of the competition. They have specific features that other territories cannot offer. With its history, its emblematic buildings, its boulevards, its museums, and its cultural and leisure offerings, the city of Paris has specific characteristics that no other city can offer. The same goes for many other cities and regions that distinguish themselves solely by means of their easily identifiable characteristics.
- Differentiation through communication or the creation of a differentiated positioning: each place is different from all the others, but objective differences are occasionally tenuous. Many beach or ski resorts, although each may have some particular features, offer an environment and infrastructures that are comparable and, in the eyes of most customers, interchangeable. The same goes for conference centres or industrial zones close to major highways. In such cases differentiation cannot be based on objective characteristics (unique selling proposition) but on the creation of differences based on communication (unique communication proposition).
- Last, differentiation through price: in terms of place promotion, price differentiation is basically achieved through taxation advantages. In this case, a territory's objective or perceived characteristics are not what will make the difference but price, which gives persons and businesses an incentive to come or remain in the territory. The example of Ireland's corporate taxation system is very instructive. In the 1990s, Ireland, an island nation whose industrial fabric is not highly developed in comparison with other European countries, decided to tax corporate profits at 12.5%. This comparative fiscal advantage (in most European countries, the rate is about 20%) had a substantial effect on the economy, with many international companies, including Microsoft, Intel, Google and Pfizer, establishing their European head offices in the country. Even though Ireland, under pressure from other European countries and the OECD, agreed to increase the minimum rate to 15%, it is still, together with Hungary, the most attractive EU member state as regards corporate taxation.

Differentiation based on communication	Strong	Differentiation based solely on communication Requires substantial resources		Strong differentiation, almost impossible to copy
	Moderate		Differentiation based on some objective elements, reinforced by communication	
	Weak	No differentiation		Objective differentiation that should be backed up by differentiation through communication
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Differentiation based on objective characteristics				

Figure 13.7 Combination of differentiation types

While differentiation by price is more of an exception than the rule (by definition, there is always only one offering that is financially more attractive than the others), differentiation based on objective characteristics and based on communication, as well as a mix of these two, are the norm. Figure 13.7 shows situations resulting from a mix of these two types of differentiation.

Ideally, a place will enjoy advantages or attractiveness factors that others do not have and that are backed up by good communication (a strong brand, for example). Singapore exemplifies a country with strong economic attractiveness (international trade, finance, and industry with high added value) supported by major infrastructure (ports, airports, information technologies) and investment in research and culture. A single brand, “Singapore. Passion Made Possible”, has since 2017 served both tourism promotion (Singapore Tourism Board) and economic promotion (Economic Development Board).

A place with strong characteristics related to its history, culture, geography, residents, and so on obviously holds an advantage over other places. While this may well suffice, generally, an absence of marketing activities and above all of communication may in the long term penalise such a territory if other territories do not remain inactive. Conversely, if a place has no or few distinctive elements, strong communication activity will be required, failing which the territory will not be taken into consideration in the decisions of businesses and persons from other regions.

Decisions taken regarding the differentiation strategy must be geared to determining the desired image positioning in the eyes of target audiences. This positioning must of course align with the often pre-existing brand strategy.

Choice of instruments

As indicated in Chapter 8, when it comes to choosing instruments, whether they are classified into four, five, or seven groups is ultimately of little importance. Of greater significance are coherence in the chosen mix, a minimum level of intensity to ensure effectiveness, and last, creativity or originality in developing or implementing instruments.

A sufficiently broad view must be taken of the coherence or the dosage of the various instruments to prevent any possibility of perceived dissonance and to strengthen the combined effect of the use of all instruments. For example, developing communication on the quality of life in a region can be a delicate matter if there are regular reports in the media of atmospheric pollution exceeding authorised levels. Similarly, promising tax advantages for business can be problematic if successive changes of government do not guarantee that commitments will be maintained. These examples may appear trivial, but successful place promotion does call for strong coherence between territorial public policies, priorities established, and instruments chosen. If this kind of coherence is not maintained over time, there is a high risk of dissonance that can be damaging to the place's image.

Experience has shown that marketing instruments, particularly communication as a part of place promotion, need to be used with sufficient intensity to reach a minimum effectiveness threshold. Given the quantity of advertising messages to which we are subjected on a daily basis, plus the number of organised events, an occasional presence in the media or at events will have practically no impact. Regular, sufficient presence needs to be aimed at if any degree of effectiveness is to be attained. It would be no easy matter to estimate the amount of money that Qatar has invested in raising its profile on the international scene over the last 15 years. In any case, we are talking about billions, and we can confidently assert that the majority of the world's population now knows of this country's existence and that opinion leaders worldwide are able to locate the country and are aware of its main characteristics. Conversely, innumerable cities, regions, and countries have launched a new brand or have developed a new visual identity with a major event that is followed by very few activities through lack of resources or a change in government.

Last, of course, creativity and originality must be mentioned. Copying I♥NY,⁶ as many cities and regions have done, is no guarantee of success. Quite the opposite. Similarly, many places have made sustainability the focal point of their communications. Without wishing to call into question this objective, which is after all vital to humankind's survival, only territories that lead the way in implementing corresponding public policies can afford to make such a claim. For others, the risk of being perceived as not credible is high. Therefore, it is recommended that, whenever possible, instruments be developed and implemented in an original way based on the place's characteristics.

Implementation and budgeting

A good strategy often owes much to good implementation. There is no use in reaching consensus on a situation, setting priorities, developing specific positioning, and

choosing instruments to be deployed if, in the final analysis, the work is not completed or is done unprofessionally and if planning is unrealistic. Special attention must be paid to the following:

- Assessment of the strategy's coherence;
- Creation of an implementation plan;
- Determination of budgets for resources to be mobilised and expected expenses.

13.5 Implementation of the strategy: problems and recommendations

Many strategies have observed the steps set out here and have achieved coherence approved by all stakeholders concerned and yet ultimately fail. The reasons for failure are multiple (see, for example, Sevin and Kaefer, 2021). Sometimes they are very basic, for example, measures being insufficiently coordinated and dispersed over a period of time rather than being concentrated at a particular moment to allow them to reach a minimum effectiveness threshold. The following paragraphs address these problems, first specifying the major problem and then putting forward recommendations. Let's begin with elements specific to place branding and marketing before dealing with more general situations that are found in any marketing strategy.

Capitalising on what is there

Many places—and those who lead them—have very high ambitions. Although such ambitions are to be lauded, in most situations, and especially if resources are limited, the appropriate course of action is to develop a strategy based on the places' existing dimensions and characteristics. This is a pragmatic solution and one that has the advantage of not raising expectations that cannot be met. The identification of resources specific to the place, strong coordination of the actors involved, and support for measures taken by all stakeholders will be sufficient to achieve good results, especially if measures are maintained over the long term.

Witness, for instance, the countless places that use the sustainability argument in their communications to attract tourists and businesses when a close look shows that they are either lagging behind in this area or have taken no particular measures that could distinguish them from others. Gothenburg, Sweden, is one city that explicitly mentions sustainability in its promotional activities, but it is one of the leaders in international rankings.⁷ This is not the case for all cities that brandish the concept.

Avoid focusing solely on the brand or a flagship

All too often, situations arise where certain actors believe that, with a brand and a new logo, various problems that have been identified will disappear. The success of a place-promotion exercise depends above all on its strategic foundation: a logo is merely the tip of the iceberg of concerted strategic work by stakeholders. A brand

must be a co-construction resulting from a process in which the actors concerned are, and feel themselves to be, involved. At the operational level, solid work must be carried out to bring a brand alive: creation of a community around the brand, creation of a network of brand ambassadors, communication campaigns, promotion of the brand through events or projects, and so on. The reason the “Geneva, A World Of Its Own”⁸ endeavour foundered was no doubt because the focus was placed on the logo and the slogan rather than on investing in getting the various parties involved and developing a shared vision. The visual identity developed in 2010 generated very little ownership among stakeholders and was consequently very little used.⁹ Was it wise to commit CHF 200,000 to the launch of a new logo by a world-renowned communication agency while local promotion actors were divided on how to face a variety of challenges, including heightened competition from other places (conference locations, weekend destinations) and a difficult economic context (financial crisis, high costs in Switzerland, the arrival on the market of digital disruptors)? At the risk of opening discussion of a sensitive subject, it would certainly have been more strategic to prioritise, or at least not to ignore, the search for a shared vision on major challenges while proposing concrete measures supported by stakeholders.

Place marketing would seem primarily to serve tourism promoting the destination and economic promotion. A place’s image indeed has a palpable effect on the tourists, entrepreneurs, and investors that it is seeking to attract. And yet place branding is just as relevant for internal audiences: this is a matter of developing the place’s identity and values and a shared vision. All too often, marketing is reduced to but one of its functions: selling. As indicated earlier, place marketing does not seek to sell the place but to incite people to discover it, live in it, and innovate in it.

The same applies to so-called flagship or landmark monuments or events that act as references or beacons for the territory. While the Guggenheim effect on Bilbao’s attractiveness and the construction of the Elbphilharmonie on that of Hamburg are far from negligible, the trend is towards promoting the richness and diversity of a place beyond a single element.

The success of Bilbao and Amsterdam chiefly rests on what actors have made of them: first came symbols of strategic reflection on developing the place, followed by powerful symbols for communication and promotion. Then, with the aid of a variety of measures to support development of the place and improve its offering, they became symbols of attractive ecosystems. With regard to *Iamsterdam* (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2007), several years of concerted strategic effort came before the idea of conceiving a logo. According to those involved in the process, the idea of a logo came at the last minute, when stakeholders realised that, apart from “a big strategic document”, they had nothing concrete to present to the press.

Political support for the strategy, measures, and inclusion of all stakeholders

While the participation and involvement of all stakeholders are very important in a place-promotion process, support from political authorities is crucial. This is because the majority of measures taken to promote a territory are linked to specific

public policies: a new museum linked to cultural policy, the development of walking trails associated with land-use planning or a sports policy, a tax-incentive policy to attract businesses, and so on. Although isolated measures taken by private actors may generate positive spinoffs for a region, political buy-in and where possible strong support are often the keys to success.

The basic idea of a place-marketing process must be understood and supported by all political authorities as an initiative that concerns the place as a whole over the long term. The strategy must be accepted by political authorities (ideally by consensus, but at least in the absence of a veto from any quarter), but it must also be accepted by the place's stakeholders, who should not be selected for instrumental purposes but should be seen as reflecting the place's dynamic reality. In addition, the strategy must not be exclusively a matter of public policy but must also involve the private sphere and civil society. Implementation of the strategy or, in other words, activation of an action plan, must be pragmatic. It must be in keeping with the basic purpose of the process and follow the strategy. However, too much reliance on consensus in implementation could prevent project and events from being realised. From this perspective, the process could be made to advance along two parallel avenues: a strategic avenue (output = strategy) involving all stakeholders, relatively long and complicated, but essential, and a practical avenue, with concrete measures from the outset (outputs = concrete measures). The practical avenue should strengthen the strategic avenue by including stakeholders and by demonstrating what the process can achieve—for example, through measures that can be easily and quickly implemented to generate positive dynamics that will help the rest of the process (measures that could be termed “quick wins”).

Do not confuse place marketing with institutional marketing

Place marketing is not the same as institutional marketing. The first is aimed at promoting the entire place and its public, private, and associative actors, while the second promotes the actions and services of political and administrative authorities. Authorities that instigate a place-marketing process must accept the fact that the initiative will go beyond their reach and that they will not have complete control over it. The process must become the property of the stakeholders, of which the authorities are just one among several. The process is collective and co-constructed. Also, while political boundaries are clearly set and governed by a specific framework, the boundaries of the place that is the subject of the branding process may vary. This flexibility can be put to strategic use. Examples are Amsterdam, which boasts of having a beach (Amsterdam Beach), even though it is far from (and according to locals has nothing to do with) the city of Amsterdam, and the “Only Lyon” brand, whose strategy encompasses neighbouring territories in order to offer businesses wider hosting possibilities. Clear separation between place and institutional marketing also makes for clarity in communication. For example, where health authorities have to regulate the behaviour of tourists, it is wise to do so under a different brand than that which vaunts the attractions of the destination.

Involve the local population at the earliest possible stage

The trend is clear: cases that succeed adopt a co-construction approach, with deliberative processes involving the local population as early on as possible. To make the process more inclusive, it is generally wise to communicate publicly (including in the media) once the first stages have been embarked upon yet without generating high expectations regarding the anticipated outcome. The media must also take the process on board and understand the issues involved. The communication process differs from the usual government “top-down” communications. Here it is not so much a matter of informing the media about government decisions but rather of presenting the implementation of a multi-stakeholder place-marketing initiative that will result in a concerted strategy. It must be explained that the strategy has been launched and is supported by the government but that thereafter the stakeholders, including the population, are in charge.

The need to harmonise the use of marketing elements over the long term

Today no one questions Borden’s (1964) call for a “harmonious” marketing mix of measures with external effect. Numerous behavioural studies have indeed confirmed that target groups do not take in and assess each marketing message in isolation but all messages as a whole. Thus, the quality of an offering is not judged in isolated, “objective” fashion but in conjunction with price and arguments put forward in advertising and at the time of sale. A high-quality hotel offering that can easily be obtained at a reduced price from online sales sites may suffer a severe blow to its image. When the effects of the various instruments strengthen each other, we can speak of positive synergies. On the other hand, synergies will be termed negative when the effects of certain instruments do not harmonise with each other. The negative mechanism will be triggered when the marketing mix gets bogged down in contradictions that arouse the suspicions of target groups. To come back to a previous example, a place that stresses sustainability in connection with its tourist offering despite the fact that no concrete effects can be discerned (road traffic congestion, absence of public transport, poor waste management, little respect for the environment from residents, etc.) runs a strong risk of seeing the effects of its communications nullified.

In practice, harmonious coordination of marketing instruments cannot be achieved in ad-hoc fashion but must be sustained over the medium and long term. Use of the marketing mix must trigger a process of psychological learning in target groups, creating a representation of the offering (image of the place) and preferences. Changes in the use of instruments, particularly when too sudden and too frequent, will hinder this process. Changes of logo or changes in public policies, for example, in the taxation area, can plunge the various target groups into doubt.

It is important to understand from the outset that all marketing measures send signals that may reinforce each other or cancel each other out in the minds of target audiences, hence the importance of keeping to a precise course of action for all marketing measures so that images and preferences can build up in the minds

of target audiences without hindrance over the years. Conceived of in this way, the use of the marketing mix becomes a long-term investment whose effects will manifest over time.

The need for sufficiently intense commitment

Practical experience of marketing and various empirical studies have shown that, in many cases, the relationship between the commitment intensity of a marketing instrument (expressed, for example, in the cost of corresponding measures) and its impact (for example, the repercussions in terms of visitor numbers) can be represented in the form of an S curve. The exact shape of this curve is often a matter of pure speculation. For the purposes of this book, it is enough to note that the S-shape shown in Figure 13.8 defines, for each marketing instrument, the minimum effectiveness threshold, which has to be exceeded to make the commitment to the instrument in question viable. Unfortunately, this minimum level cannot be calculated in a way that will be valid for every case, because it depends largely on the specific parameters of the situation and on the synergies resulting from its combination with other marketing measures. But an experienced manager will generally know how to set the minimum advertising budget required for a given market or to predict the minimum number of contacts necessary to rise above the minimum effectiveness threshold.

In these conditions, it seems natural to ensure a sufficiently intense commitment to every instrument. In practice, however, financial means are often limited and

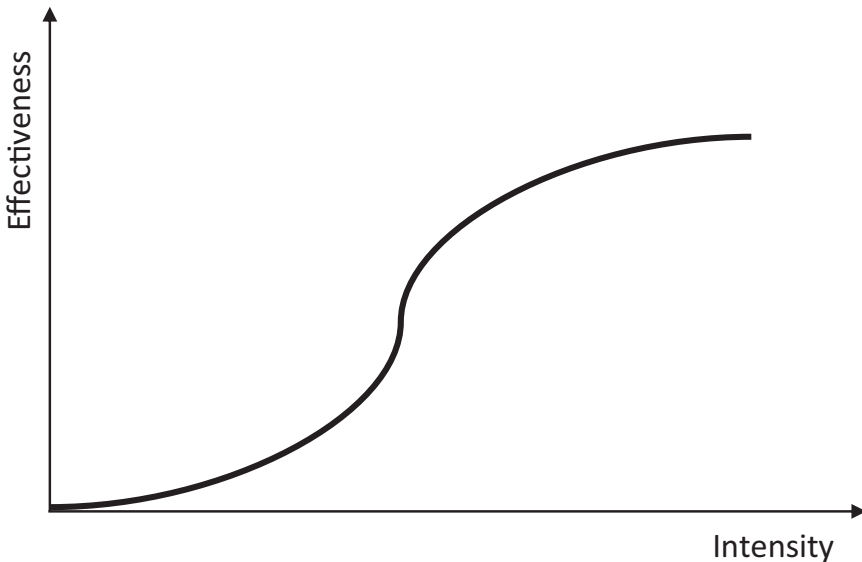


Figure 13.8 Relationship between intensity and effectiveness of a marketing tool

scattered over various markets, groups of customers, and instruments under the watering-can principle. Neglecting the minimum effectiveness threshold is one of the most frequently made mistakes in marketing, whether out of ignorance, from a fear of setting clear priorities, or from a poorly understood sense of fairness (for example, when the budget is subjected to cuts).

Table 13.3 summarises a checklist of important elements to consider when designing and implementing a place-branding strategy.

Table 13.3 Checklist for the implementation and follow-up of a place-branding strategy

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Tensions to be managed</i>	<i>Questions</i>
Develop a place-branding strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-cutting effect • Planning and directing the stages of the process versus allowing shared project to emerge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary internal and external analysis • What does the place have to offer concretely? • How is the place perceived and what does it convey? • Who leads the strategy and who manages the process of formulating the strategy step by step? • Who are the stakeholders? • What type of place brand is desired: an umbrella brand, a sectoral brand, or a new type? • What is the connection between the strategy and existing place-branding initiatives? • Who are the priority targets/at whom is the brand aimed? • What are the competing places? • What is the vision of the place over the short, medium, and long term?
Quest for the relevant place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-opetition between places • Political/institutional versus managerial approach • Functional versus political/institutional approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the relevant place in relation to the desired targets? • How is multiscalarity experienced and perceived? • Is a flexible approach being adopted? What does that imply?
Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to create a shared project versus divergent interests • Coordination between a range of public policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can stakeholders be brought together? How can emulation around the place-brand project be created? • What incentives can be put in place? • What form of coordination? • Does a structure need to be put in place? What type of structure and why?

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Tensions to be managed</i>	<i>Questions</i>
Piloting and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing organisations, institutions, and processes versus new structures and new processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is piloting the process? How will the potential new structure function? Who funds the process and the various activities and how is planning managed? Do new mechanisms need to be put in place? How will activities be carried out, concretely? How are technological developments integrated into the process? In terms of data (interactive databases, “big data”) or in terms of innovative tools (cloud computing, artificial intelligence) In terms of information sharing between stakeholders on the one hand and with potential targets on the other
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective facts versus ambitions, perceptions, and projections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is in charge of the evaluation? What indicators and methodology are chosen to measure benefits? How can the results of the evaluation be integrated in order to improve the strategy?

Notes

- 1 See the 2012 IPSOS survey conducted following this first campaign: www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/publication/2012-04/Presentacion_MARCA_PERU.pdf (retrieved 22.02.2023).
- 2 MINCETUR news release: www.gob.pe/institucion/mincetur/noticias/49204-ministro-vasquez-encuesta-determina-los-principales-motivos-de-orgullo-para-todos-los-peruanos (retrieved 22.02.2023).
- 3 The 2019 Future Brand Country Index can be downloaded from www.futurebrand.com/futurebrand-country-index (retrieved 22.02.2023).
- 4 Details on the site of My Peru Global: <https://myperuglobal.com/07-marcas-sectoriales-que-promueven-el-comercio-exterior-peruano> (retrieved 22.02.2023).
- 5 For example, by empowering associations of residents or by setting up participatory tools (see e.g., <https://lecourrier.ch/2023/03/26/le-budget-participatif-un-outil-evolutif/>).
- 6 Note that New York City and the New York City Foundation have decided to adapt the logo, now using We ♥ NYC.
- 7 Global Destination Sustainability Index, Results 2022 (www.gds.earth/2022-results/).
- 8 See www.swissinfo.ch/fre/toute-l-actu-en-bref/gen%C3%A8ve-dispose-de-sa-marque-d%C3%A9pos%C3%A9e---gen%C3%A8ve-un-monde-en-soi-/8390314.
- 9 See <http://geneve.suisse-blog.ch/372/la-marque-%C2%AB-geneve-%E2%80%93-un-monde-en-soi-%C2%BB/>.

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14 Monitoring and evaluation



14.1 Introduction

Both public policy and strategy are a matter of a public community's desire to attain objectives involving defined target groups (see, for example, Zenker and Martin, 2011). Unless measures taken are based on careful thinking about the persons, businesses, or communities being addressed, and unless a clearly identified objective has been set, there is a high risk of the resources mobilised being wasted. Regarding place strategies, and here a reference to Chapter 2 is appropriate, one difficulty arises from the fact that most measures reflect both a public-policy perspective and a more specific place-development perspective. The city of Hamburg's decision to build a new concert hall was aimed at several objectives simultaneously: to provide the city with a cultural facility, obviously, but also to enhance the offering for tourists, contribute to the repurposing of a collection of hangars and storage depots, and serve as a reference point for international representation of the city (HafenCity).

Like the Sydney Opera House before it, Hamburg's emblematic Elbphilharmonie, inaugurated in 2017, became a world-famous attraction. But how should we evaluate a project whose construction lasted over 10 years (6 more than planned) and whose overall cost is estimated at over € 800 million (whereas 15 years earlier the price had been announced as € 77 million)?¹ Should it be assessed solely as a construction project with its problems and its delays? Leaving aside the cultural offering for residents, should it also assess the city's attractiveness (many tourists visit the building without necessarily attending a concert) and the local economic impact of the modernising of the neighbourhood (the building also has a hotel, apartments, conference rooms, restaurants, bars)? All these elements are important, but this case clearly illustrates the difficulty of simultaneously taking into account many different objectives and criteria that require varied methods of analysis (see, for example, Chamard and Schlenker, 2017).

This chapter first presents the three types of evaluation that can be conducted in the framework of a place-development policy. Since place-development policies stand at the intersection of public policies, communication strategies (place branding), and marketing strategies (place marketing), we will consider the three corresponding types of evaluation. Again, using the example of the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, an evaluation of cultural policy, an evaluation of this flagship

building's effect on the city's attractiveness, and an evaluation of urban-marketing effects cannot all be conducted in the same way, even though they are complementary. The chapter then moves on to an overview of methods by which these analyses can be carried out. Finally, a simplified evaluation process is proposed.

14.2 Evaluation at the public-policy level

The development of evaluation in the public sector is the result, on the one hand, of changes in the conception of the state and of relationships between the state and its citizens and, on the other hand, of the emergence of new forms of government action (NPM, the creation of agencies, public–private partnerships, etc.). With the growth in public deficits, political institutions must increasingly set priorities for choices regarding both policies and methods of intervention. Evaluation of these choices has thus become an integral component of public policies. On top of this come the changes that have occurred in relations between the state and citizens. Not only are the latter in a position to appreciate the services provided by the state, and the quality of those services, but they want greater involvement in decisions (participatory democracy). These changes have led numerous researchers to take an interest in these questions and to propose analysis frameworks for the evaluation of public policies (e.g., Dolbeare, 1975; Nagel, 2002; Wollmann, 2007).

The other aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is changes in the conception of organisations mandated to execute public tasks. Administrations had long been conducted in accordance with a bureaucratic vision, whereby they were subject to strict control regarding the use of resources, but relatively little attention was paid to the effects of their actions. Now, under the principles of NPM, they are much more accountable and must answer for the effectiveness of measures taken, the quality of services provided, and the economic efficiency of those services. As a result, new forms of conducting public action have developed, including the creation of agencies, the signing of service contracts with public and private actors, and partnerships between public and private bodies. They allow for a more detailed analysis of the effects of measures in the light of resources made available. Evaluation of public action has also been facilitated by the introduction of modern management tools (mission budget and programme budget, analytical accounting, information systems, evaluation techniques, etc.).

Unlike private companies, which seek to establish a connection between communication measures and economic or financial performance (increase in turnover or profits, increase in market share), the public sector has a far more complex boundary and levels of evaluation. This complexity has been raised both by recognised academics (e.g., Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2003) and by practitioners with an interest in these matters.² Figure 14.1 presents the three main evaluation levels.

There are generally three levels. The first, output analysis, looks at resources committed (inputs), measures taken, and services delivered. To determine whether the concepts that were formulated and the decisions that were taken are having an effect, we first need to ascertain whether the planned personal, financial, and infrastructure resources have indeed been mobilised. A political change, a budget

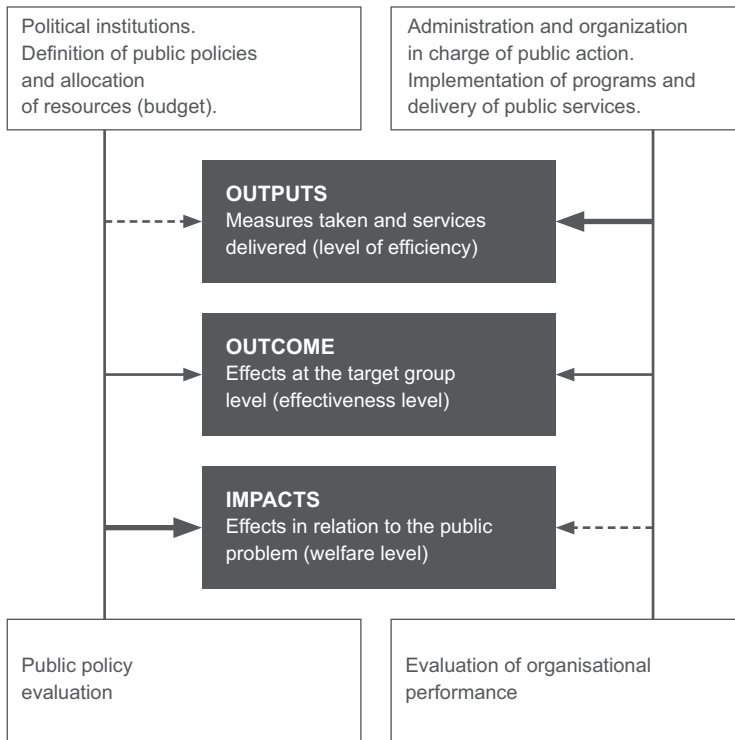


Figure 14.1 Levels of evaluation for public policies

crisis, the departure of certain persons, and unforeseen events can result in changes in the assignment of resources. Depending on the situation, it may be necessary to evaluate all measures taken and their outcomes as a function of resources that were actually used. The next step is to list and record details of the number of services proposed or delivered in a given period (normally one year) with the resources made available. This might be a number of concerts, a number of spectators, and so on, to which could be added an analysis of the quality of these services (compliance with procedure and deadlines). At this level, information about the organisation's efficiency—its ability to deliver services with resource constraints—can be obtained.

The second level is concerned with outcomes—that is, effects on target groups. In the education sector, the focus will be on skills acquired by students³ or on the pass or failure rate at the end of the year or training cycle. If a city organises a summer festival, the focus will be on the number of participants, their origin (residents, tourists), the type of “consumption” (for example, with or without an overnight stay), satisfaction with the concerts and activities offered, spinoffs for merchants, and so on. Obviously, this level of evaluation will consider resources but also, more

generally, the entire policy that has been implemented. The aim will therefore be to study the efficiency of a policy initiative globally.

The third and final level, specific to the public sector, is that of impacts. The goal here is to analyse whether all measures decided upon and completed have had an effect on the public problem that was identified. Public investment in cultural activities is not primarily aimed at providing shows or counting museum visits but at disseminating culture in all its forms, increasing the region's attractiveness, creating social connections, combating social inequalities, and strengthening democracy. This is a very wide-ranging level, obviously influenced by public-policy decisions taken by political authorities but also by many other factors over which institutions have only limited control. As regards promoting places, some studies have highlighted the need to better understand a destination's attractiveness in relation to satisfaction of tourists (Cracolici and Nijkamp, 2009) and their desire to return to the destination for a second visit. This process makes it possible to build regional tourist profiles based on the places considered and to assess the impact on visitors of tourism policies pursued by the authorities of a place.

Extending an evaluation of public policies to include organisational performance is therefore a complex matter (Rauhut and Rauhut Kompaniets, 2020). Citizens and elected officials are mostly interested in the effects on society and much less interested in the number of services delivered. Conversely, administrations and agencies are becoming strongly concerned with efficiency levels, since they can influence outcomes but have only a very limited effect on impacts: changes in public policy and in resources allocated fall outside their jurisdiction, and they cannot assume direct responsibility for societal changes. An economic-promotion agency will want to encourage businesses to set up and create jobs (with quantitative indicators) and highlight the short-term results. Annual press conferences organised with the authorities will highlight this or that new business that has established itself. But if one is thinking in terms of public policy, attention must be given to the lifespan of these businesses, to their integration into the socioeconomic fabric, and to the tax contributions they bring (corporate income tax and salaries paid). Several regions have in retrospect regretted the setting up of major logistical or distribution centres that became highly automated. They generate heavy traffic flow, the built-up surface is irreversible, the promised jobs are deferred, and the profits are repatriated into other countries with more lenient tax regimes. The euphoria generated by the arrival of the big multinational quickly evaporates.

In the economic-promotion field, it is also possible to assess the efforts deployed by places (Lee, 2016). The output level is measured in terms of the number of companies that have set up or the number of jobs created; the outcome level in terms of the number of people who come to settle in the region or who remain there because they find employment; and the impact level in terms of the diversification of the economic fabric, the unemployment level, changes in taxation revenue, and so on. But from the moment a company decides to set up in a region, it can easily take a decade before concrete effects can be measured in terms of impact are felt. For example, in late 2022, Rolex, the internationally famous manufacturer of luxury watches, decided to build its new plant in Bulle, in a bucolic environment providing picture-postcard views of traditional Switzerland, with the Château de Gruyère,

the cheese of the same name, and the Cailler chocolate factory. Two thousand jobs were to be created on the site. But this regional economic promotion coup (output) raises many questions for the future, since the region is already undergoing strong economic development, and the fear of significantly increased motorised traffic: people with the required expertise could travel distances of several dozen or even several hundred kilometres by car (environmental impact).

Given that place development involves several areas of public policy simultaneously (economy, land use, mobility, taxation, etc.), the difficulty of making a thorough assessment, taking into account the three levels explained previously, becomes clear. Measures to support the economy, such as investment subsidies, can be assessed without too much difficulty provided that one restricts the evaluation to the number of subsidies granted and the number of jobs created (the output level, and partially the outcome level). But if one wishes to assess the societal impact, then taxation policy, land-use policy, and so on must be taken into account, because an investment support measure may be undermined by volatile fiscal policies and too many constraints on the setting up of companies.

14.3 Evaluation at the marketing level

After discussing evaluation issues at the public policy level, this section looks at the same evaluation issues but at the marketing level. The goal of a marketing strategy, whether deployed by a private company or a public body, is to persuade the persons or companies targeted to purchase or consume a product or a service. Three elements need to be considered. First, target groups. The basic principle of marketing is not to address an entire population but target groups whose behaviours or expectations are relatively homogeneous. In destination marketing, a ski station will aim at different clienteles (Kreziak et al., 2009), such as a younger clientele with above-average financial means or families with children coming to learn to ski. These two target groups are not incompatible, but the corresponding marketing approaches will not be the same (types of subscription, accommodation offering, images used in communications, etc.). The second element involves targeting a purchasing or consumption behaviour, regardless of who pays for the product or service. No purpose is served if potential clients, companies, or individuals have the intention to come and settle in the region. What ultimately matters is that they take action; otherwise the marketing initiatives will remain fruitless. Last, the targeted action—purchase or consumption—concerns a product or service in the broader sense. If a community organises a summer music festival or other festivities, the goal is that inhabitants and tourists who happen to be in the region attend the events, regardless of whether they are free of charge. It is not enough that people express their intention to attend or their general support for the event. What is needed is that they attend and are satisfied.

In marketing initiatives, objectives can be divided into two types:

- economic objectives: a set of indicators having an absolute or relative value and to which monetary value can be attached: sales figures, contribution margin, profit, growth of sales or profits, cost-income ratio, and so on; all these

indicators can of course be determined by region, customer group, season, and so on.

- non-economic objectives: all the other indicators that are not indirectly or directly assessed in monetary terms; they are very numerous and may include number of customers, market share, satisfaction, recommendations, and so on.

In the private sector and part of the para-public sector, economic objectives will generally trump non-economic objectives, since ultimately profitability is what enables a company to survive. And yet, since the end of the 20th century, certain non-economic objectives have assumed special importance. Among these are criteria such as customer loyalty or satisfaction, which are indirectly a source of greater profitability for a company: often, it is much less expensive to ensure that a customer returns regularly than to invest in acquiring a new clientele. For a hotel, the ability to rely on clientele who make reservations year after year, even if this requires offering them benefits to ensure their loyalty, will be more profitable than searching for new customers year after year, even if they pay a higher price. There are some similarities with this approach at the economic-development level. One sometimes sees substantial resources being deployed to attract new companies, whereas companies already located in the region can also, given support from the authorities, prosper, provide employment, and pay taxes.

In place development, non-economic objectives trump economic objectives: it is very often impossible to make a direct connection between a set of marketing measures and sales figures or profit because first, the result depends on other factors, and second, the spinoff benefits of these measures are often enjoyed by other (private) actors. If a tourism-promotion office conducts a major targeted campaign, estimating the number of people who come in response to the campaign will pose no great difficulty, but placing a figure on these persons' total spending in restaurants, businesses, and other regional outlets is another matter entirely.

14.4 Evaluation at the communication level

Place branding, even though it is complementary to place marketing, as we have pointed out on several occasions in previous chapters, is best viewed from a communications perspective, and place-branding measures must be assessed on this basis (Pasquier and Villeneuve, 2018; Government Communication Service, 2018). Without necessarily going into various forms of pre-testing and analysis of the communication resources committed, at the very least the medium and the message must be evaluated.

Evaluation of the medium

The purpose of the medium is to take the message to target groups, and its evaluation involves measuring the “physical” contact between the medium and the individual. If a message does not reach its target, there is little point in assessing its effectiveness.

Where advertising is concerned, information on a medium's ability to reach persons is generally provided by audience studies. For other forms of communication, this task very often rests with the organiser of the activity or with the advertiser:

- Number of brochures distributed
- Number of newspapers to which a news release was sent and number of articles published as a result
- Number of visitors to a booth in an exhibition
- Number of visitors to a website
- Number of members of the community or followers on social media
- And so on

In addition to simple quantitative information on the number of contacts between the medium and individuals, other indicators on the quality of contact and the relationship with the medium can also be taken into account. Among these are the medium's notoriety and credibility, the duration of contact, and the degree of interaction between the individual and the medium.

Social media are becoming increasingly important in communication. Not only are they easy to use, but measuring their reach is much simpler than with other media such as the press or television. There are many free or low-cost tools to identify the existence of social media, their use by the organisations concerned, and their effects in terms of visibility. Table 14.1 shows criteria that can be used to easily measure the use of social media by organisations in charge of place promotion.

Evaluation of message reception and cognitive effects

For persons who have had at least one contact with the medium, the questions to be asked are: did they see the message, did they correctly attribute the message to the issuer, what parts of the message do they recall, and to what extent did they understand the message? Table 14.2 sets out in schematic form questions in connection with this level of evaluation.

Table 14.1 Indicators of social media use

<i>Recurrence of use</i>	<i>Intensity of use of platform potentialities</i>	<i>Outreach</i>
Number of posts per month published on the platform by organisations in charge of place promotion	Ratio of distinctive content*/total content published on the platform by organisations in charge of place promotion	Total number of followers Ratio of total number of followers/population of the place

*Distinctive content = video posts, link posts, and image posts in the case of Facebook

Source: Mabillard et al. (2022)

Table 14.2 Questions regarding cognitive evaluation of the message

<i>Recognition of the message</i>	<i>Attribution to the issuer</i>	<i>Recognition of elements of the message</i>	<i>Understanding of the meaning</i>	<i>Approval</i>
<i>Questions:</i>	<i>Questions:</i>	<i>Questions:</i>	<i>Questions:</i>	<i>Questions:</i>
Spontaneous recall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what articles/posts/brochures on the subject of [x] have you seen recently? Prompted recall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have you seen the following post or have you seen an article on the subject of [y] in newspaper [x]? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can you tell me who issued that/brochure/news release/post? (requires showing the communication measure and hiding the issuer's name) 	Spontaneous recognition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what are the main arguments or elements in the message? Prompted recognition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do you remember the argument or element [x] in that communication? 	Spontaneous comprehension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What meaning or what meanings did issuer [x] want to convey to you? Prompted comprehension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you understand what issuer [x] is communicating about [y]? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you like this post/ad/brochure/other or did it persuade you?

With regard to basic recognition of a message, the technique generally employed is prompted questioning, or helping the person to indicate whether they have recently seen or received a specific message (assisted recall principle). It is of course possible to provide no prompting, but, given the very high number of messages that people face on a daily basis, providing minimal information on the communication activity concerned is recommended. For example, people will be asked whether they remember seeing the campaign for a given destination.

Often, they will then be asked to identify the issuer of the message, particularly for advertisements and commercials. Taking care to blur the logos and names involved, one can assess receivers' ability to make a clear connection between the message and the issuer. It is indeed quite common for people to recognise an advertisement or commercial without being able to name the issuer, either because the latter is unknown or insufficiently visible in the ad or commercial or because the connection with the message is not clear to the receiver. Since the credibility of the message also greatly depends on the issuer, this indication is very useful, particularly for later communication activities.

One of the questions that follows involves recognition of the elements or arguments of the message. Depending on the research methods used, people will be asked to identify them spontaneously or when prompted or to make a connection between signs in the communication and the argument being put forward. Those participating in the evaluation can thus be asked to specify the goal or goals that the campaign is aiming at. Again, depending on the subject and the measures used, this question can be formulated in a very open fashion or can contain some possible elements of an answer to be validated or negated. Finally, one can also ask questions regarding approval of the communication (this is possible for a brochure, an information booth, or an advertisement or commercial, but not for a press release, for example). This is mainly a question of looking at the aesthetic aspects of the message: the results, taken separately, are not generally very useful, but combined with others may explain observed differences.

Evaluation of affective effects

The preceding step is limited to studying the perception and recognition of the message. The next step is to verify whether (if this is the goal of the communication measure) the message has changed anything in people's attitudes to the subject, the organisation, the project, or the service being promoted:

- has their confidence in the organisation increased?
- has their attitude towards the services changed?
- have their preferences changed?

Since survey questions can be very varied and depend on the objectives sought, it is difficult to make generalisations regarding the type and form of studies that can be used to evaluate these aspects. One might proceed, for example, by constructing semantic networks (associating words with the object in question), by studying the emotional responses elicited by the message (fear generated by the image in a

prevention campaign), or by questioning the person directly (have they changed their perception of problem or are they ready to change their behaviour?).

Box 14.1 presents an interesting case study of the effect of strong criticism of the Swiss banking system on Switzerland's image (based on Pasquier and Weiss, 2009).

Box 14.1 Effects of criticism of the Swiss banking system

In 2009, Switzerland faced a crisis surrounding its financial centre further to information-exchange requirements imposed by OECD countries to combat tax evasion and criminal activity by UBS staff in the United States (actively supporting clients on tax evasion). These problems, which were resolved in the interim by agreements between countries, created major waves in the United States, where numerous articles and broadcasts in the mainstream media were devoted to these themes.

A survey of 1000 persons from the public and 400 opinion leaders (politicians, managers, journalists, think-tank members) revealed that only 28% of the public and 42% of opinion leaders had any knowledge of the subject approximately three months after the end of the crisis. Still more interesting is the fact that those who stated that they had knowledge of the subject had a better image of Switzerland than those who had no knowledge.

Ultimately, the dissemination of unfavourable information on Switzerland's financial market, Swiss banking secrecy, and the reprehensible behaviour of bank staff had no effect on confidence in the Swiss system. When participants were asked whether they agreed with the statement "Investors can feel fully confident in the financial centre of [x]", the Swiss financial centre ranked first, ahead of those of Great Britain and the United States (see Figure 14.2). In short, exposure to unfavourable information did not change Americans' affective response to Switzerland (image, attitude, confidence).

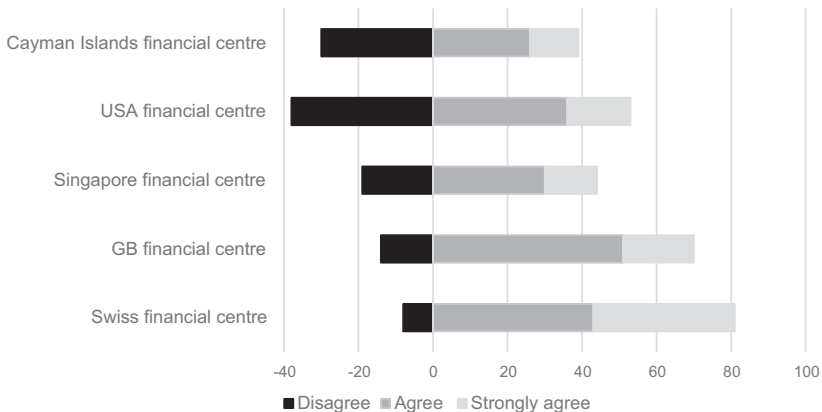


Figure 14.2 Degree of confidence in the financial markets

Evaluation of conative effects

The final level in studying the effectiveness of communications has to do with people's actual behaviour. The private sector generally focuses on this aspect because the great majority of its communication activities are ultimately aimed at increasing organisations' sales and financial results (for example, improving trust in the brand should help boost sales of products and services offered using the brand name). The situation is somewhat different in the public sector and in attractiveness policies, where many communication activities are aimed at objectives lower than behavioural aspects: providing basic information, making people aware of specific themes, increasing influence in diplomatic relations (soft power), and so on. The goal is not always to change the behaviour of the persons targeted.

In addition to the fact that this level generally carries less weight in evaluations, it will be noted that measuring it is particularly difficult for reasons already mentioned. On the one hand, isolating the effect of communication measures on elements of behaviour is often impossible, and, on the other hand, measuring behaviour is a very complex matter.

Three types of measurements are used in the study of conative effects. The first concerns behavioural intention. Particularly where behaviour cannot be measured, or where measurement is not relevant, it is preferable to focus on behavioural intention (such as the intention to visit the country, for example). This is certainly not an effective measurement of behaviour but a form of anticipating behaviour. The advantage of this indicator lies in its more direct connection with a communication measure, whereas actual behaviour can be hindered by elements that are totally independent of the communication (geographical remoteness, financial or social costs, infrastructure access problem, etc.). The two other types of measurement involve effects presented in the section on evaluation at the marketing level: non-economic indicators and economic indicators.

Example of combining types of evaluation

The following example illustrates the complexity of measuring the effectiveness of place-promotion activities. Consider national pavilions in world's fairs. While some countries limit their involvement in these exhibitions to small shared booths, most create new pavilions whose cost can vary from a few million dollars to over \$200 million in the case of the Chinese pavilion at Expo 2010 Shanghai. For the next edition, to be held in Osaka, Japan, in 2025, a number of countries have already announced pavilions costing \$20–\$30 million. Governments that decide on such very real outlays obviously have expectations in terms of return on investment. Yet nothing is more difficult than evaluating the effectiveness of this type of promotional measure (see Figure 14.3).

At the outset, one must bear in mind that a pavilion is only one among a number of communication measures, others including social-media posts, inviting journalists to write reports, mailing approaches, and so on. In addition, other public or para-public organisations such as tourism offices are also tasked with promotional activities.

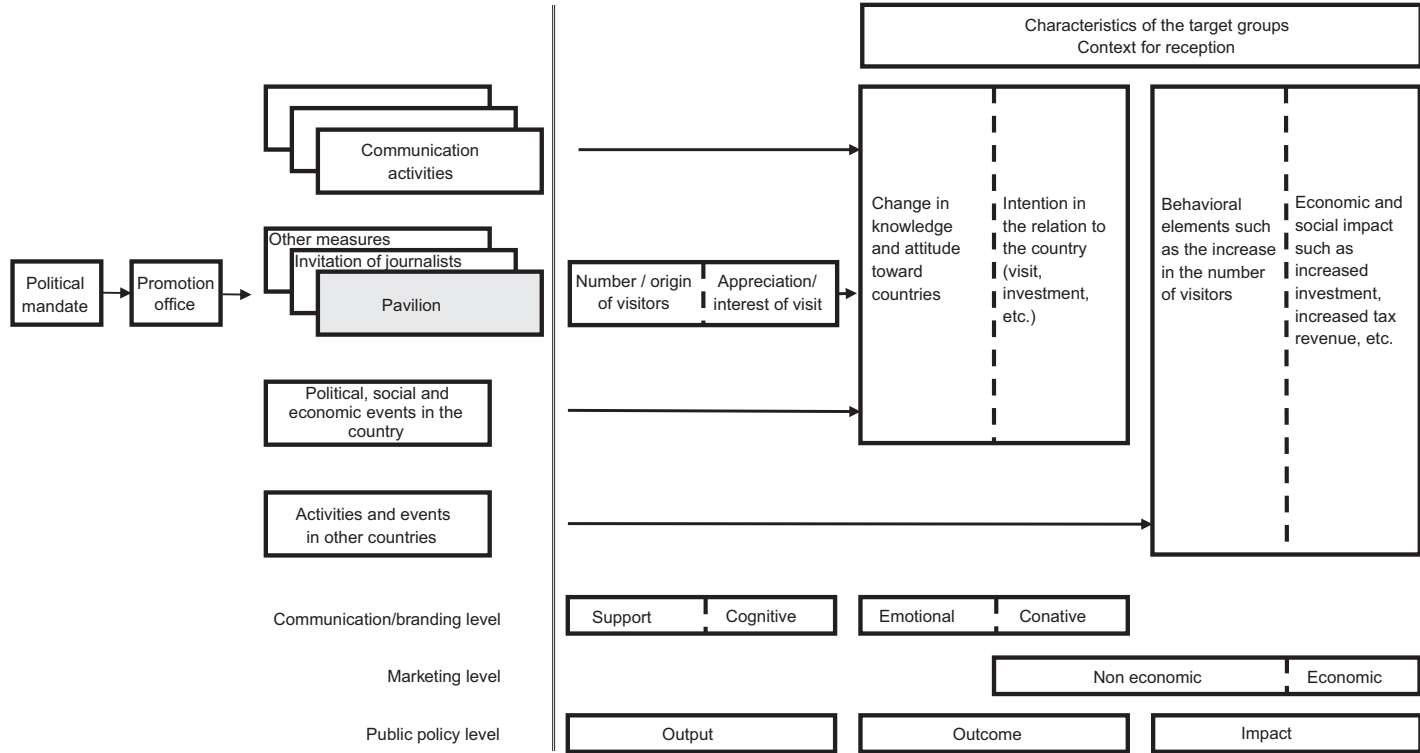


Figure 14.3 Evaluating the effects of a pavilion in a world's fair

The effectiveness of the pavilion can first be measured by numbers of visitors, the duration of visits to the pavilion, or the appreciation that visitors felt: did they have fun or experience satisfaction? Did they learn anything? Visitors' socio-demographic characteristics are also important. Since visitors to this type of exhibition come from many countries, it may be useful to know who ultimately benefits from these visits: residents of the host country, residents of the country of the pavilion, or visitors from other countries? As regards evaluation levels, at the communication level, here we are dealing with contact with the medium and, at the public-policy level, with outputs.

A more complex evaluation level comes into play if one wishes to find out whether visiting this pavilion has changed visitors' attitude to the country or to find out their intentions: do they want to travel in the country or even make investments? At the communication level, here we are dealing with emotional and cognitive components and, at the public-policy level, with outcomes. In these cases, it must be realised that it will be difficult to completely isolate the effect of visiting the pavilion from the effect of other communication measures or events in connection with the country. The population of Shanghai seemed to be more familiar with Roger Federer's tennis triumphs than the features of the Swiss pavilion.

Finally—and this is what political decision makers expect—the effect in terms of impact (public policy) or non-economic and economic effects (if a marketing approach is taken) can be measured. Was the attitude of opinion leaders in the country actually changed? Did the number of contacts for investment increase? Did the number of tourists increase? Did companies increase their imports? And so on. At this level, great care must be taken in analysing effects, because many other factors may also play a role. The economic or geopolitical situation, a pandemic, and so on can have either a multiplying effect or a strongly diminishing effect. The Peruvian parliament's impeachment of the president in December 2022 triggered a political and social crisis. Strikes, demonstrations, roadblocks, and acts of violence were witnessed. Combined with recommendations from embassies to avoid non-essential travel to the country, the situation had a major effect on tourism, an important economic activity. Other elements must also be taken into account. Even though many Chinese tourists may show an interest in a stay in Switzerland, tour operators may or may not include a visit to the country in the itinerary of the organised group tours mainly patronised by tourists from China, whose average European tour lasts only eight days.

Generally, the more well defined and specific the objectives and measures taken, the easier it will be to measure their effectiveness in terms of behaviour or impact. Conversely, global strategies such as the development of a new brand or heavy investment in developing reputation and soft power will only bear fruit over the long term and in proportions that are very difficult to measure quantitatively.

14.5 Evaluation methods

The preceding pages were concerned with evaluation criteria and data. We now turn to methods of collecting that data. Although methods are becoming increasingly sophisticated with the use of new technologies (Internet surveys, tools for

collecting big data, artificial intelligence to analyse data, etc.), the three main questions regarding the choice of a method have remained unchanged:

- Should we use existing data, which can be obtained at no great expense (available studies, press articles, social-media posts, etc.), or do we need new data requiring an ad-hoc study?
- If we need new data, do we proceed by questioning people (surveys) to discover their opinions, attitudes, intentions, and so on, or do we use observation techniques to analyse their behaviour (here again, new technologies have considerably increased the possibilities for behavioural observation)?
- If we decide to conduct a survey, will it be to study the attitudes or behaviour of a given population (quantitative survey), or will the goal be to identify new trends and understand certain unexpected developments, which would justify a qualitative survey?

As with any measurement of the performance of a management activity, the data gathered and indicators must be reliable and truly useful for monitoring the activity and making decisions. The following points should be considered when choosing indicators:

- They must match what we wish to study: the notoriety rate provides information on the extent to which a particular place is known but gives no indication about attitudes to that place;
- They must be simple and precise, so that they can be understood and interpreted;
- They must remain constant over time as regards their definition and measurement: a difference in measurement can lead to differences in results, which will make it very difficult to isolate the effect of the change in measurement;
- They must correspond to observed reality and not be due to bias or chance. This can occur with non-representative samples or when the questions can lead to bias in answers.

Since place-promotion activities generally involve a large number of actors and varied objectives, it is important at the outset to agree on the expected effects and indicators or criteria chosen; otherwise there is a risk either of choosing those that suit one actor or another, who might thus particularly highlight their own actions, or of creating ongoing conflict about the ineffectiveness of measures.

In addition to these criteria, indicators must not be too complex to gather and must be available and useful when decisions are made (information obtained too late is often of no use). In this regard, the example of Memphis (see Box 6.1) is compelling. The city set itself the goal of improving its image, promoting diversity, and providing job opportunities and activities for entrepreneurs. Thanks to communication activities that mainly told positive stories, Memphis obtained the following measured outcomes (data as of December 2022):⁴

- Residents hearing primarily negative news about Memphis has decreased since 2017, declining 21% in the city and 48% in Memphis market area;

- Regarding the dimension “Memphis is, or is becoming, a great place to live and work”, a 10% gain;
- Over 50% of residents of Atlanta, Chicago, and New York City are favourable towards Memphis: +20% in Atlanta, +15% in New York, +16% in Chicago in 18 months (from April 2019 to October 2020).

Another aspect to consider before choosing a method is to distinguish between synchronic and diachronic studies. Synchronic studies are designed to measure an outcome at a given point in time and usually to compare it with different types of benchmarks, such as the objective that was set or the outcome of a previous campaign. Diachronic or longitudinal studies, on the other hand, are designed to measure changes in certain results over time. For example, one might study changes in the degree of notoriety of or sympathy towards a place or a place brand, changes in the behaviour of targeted persons after each campaign, or changes regarding non-retention of a message (who is able to remember a message after one month, six months, or one year?).

Last, the performance of communication activities can also be studied strictly internally by comparing results in relation to one’s own indicators or by analysing them in relation to external standards or benchmarks. While it is certainly useful to compare the image of a city or region over time, for example, it is more useful to compare it with other similar entities. The image may improve over time (positive result) but significantly more slowly than that of other cities or regions (relativisation of the positive result).

Analysis of existing data (secondary data)

Whereas until the end of the last century, obtaining information was difficult and resource intensive, now—due to the evolution of the Internet providing access to most media from around the world; the growth in social media in the past decade; and that of artificial-intelligence tools for identifying, translating, and analysing information—the gathering and study of existing information has become fast, easy, and much less resource intensive. This makes it very easy to find out whether a place or a place brand is being talked about, on what media, and associated with what subjects, together with the tone (positive, negative, or neutral) of the article, post, or broadcast.

Presence Switzerland, the organisation in charge of promoting the country’s image abroad, conducts permanent monitoring of 100 media (print, online, websites, television) in 20 countries and regions. This monitoring is complemented by press reviews received from embassies. Every article having a relevant connection to Switzerland is kept and machine-translated (see Figure 14.4). The same goes for the social media that are monitored and analysed (mainly Twitter).

Systematically gathering data of this type and storing it in an information system (an Excel spreadsheet, for example) constitutes monitoring in that it enables us to track the evolution of a certain number of parameters (the general image, topics discussed, criticisms made, etc.). Monitoring does not provide much in the way of explanation about changes observed but does provide a great deal of information on situations, changes, and new perceptions.

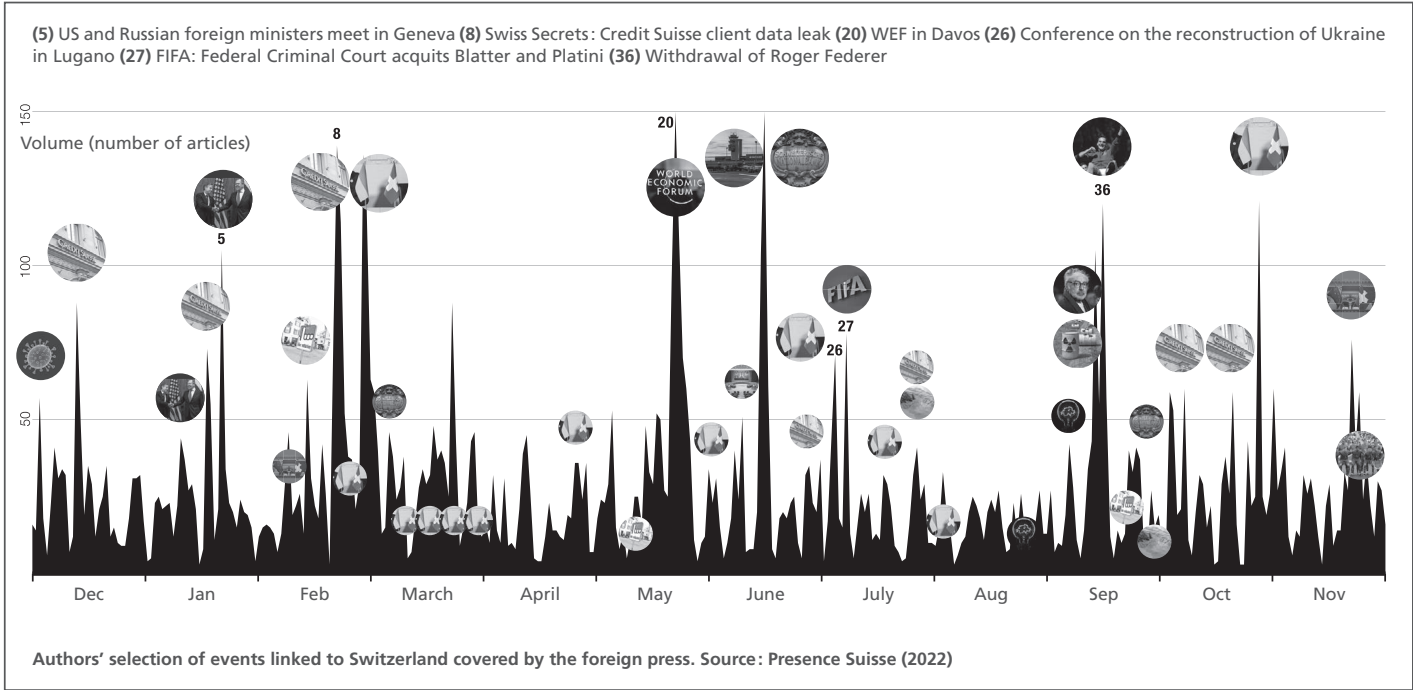


Figure 14.4 Trends in foreign media coverage of Switzerland (Presence Suisse, 2022)

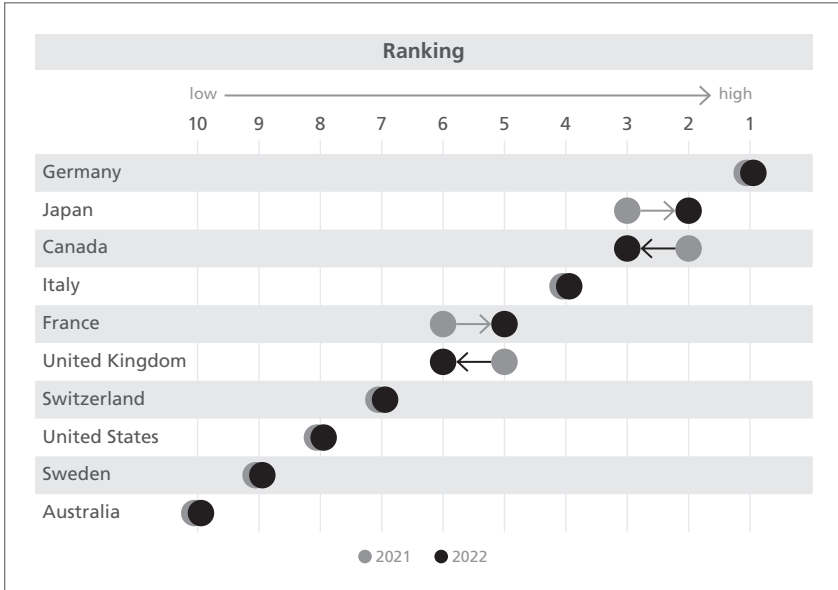


Figure 14.5 Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index (2021)

More general comparative measurements exist, such as the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index (NBI).⁵ This is an annual study that has been conducted since 2008, gathering perceptions of countries around the world (see Figure 14.5).

Surveys such as these are very useful for tracking the evolution of the image of a country or place. When combined with other questions such as “Are you thinking of visiting this country/region in the near future?”, they make it possible to analyse the impact of image on behaviours related to places.

Monitoring does not, however, provide any understanding of the attitudes, intentions, or behaviours of persons and companies. This is because, although monitoring can show the number of new companies that have set up in a region over a period, it does not tell us, other than marginally, why these companies came: was it in response to economic-promotion efforts, or simply because the region is more attractive than others, with a pool of talent, research institutes, or, at an even more basic level, a supply of cheap land or premises? The reasons that impelled companies to set up can only be identified by means of specific studies.

Qualitative methods

Qualitative surveys are conducted in an attempt to anticipate or explain certain phenomena, but they do not necessarily provide results that can be extrapolated to the whole population. There are numerous qualitative methods that can be used to gauge the effectiveness of communication. We briefly discuss two of these here: focus groups and content analyses.

Focus groups can take very varied forms, but all are based on the principle that interactions between several people on a specific topic provide results that are superior to the sum of information that could be collected individually from each person. The difference stems from the group dynamics that establish themselves during the session.

Focus groups normally consist of eight to ten persons and are facilitated by a trained moderator. Because the makeup of a group can affect results (one strongly influential member, several passive participants, etc.), at least two groups are usually formed so that results can be compared. The moderator must be neutral and tactful and must ensure that discussions remain balanced (mitigating the influence of dominant personalities and encouraging more passive participants to speak up). He or she must also seek to gather the broadest possible range of opinions and be flexible in guiding the discussion while ensuring that the data sought is gathered.

Focus groups are very useful for purposes such as in-depth analysis of a place's image, seeking ideas or avenues of communication for new campaigns, or gaining a better understanding of interactions between communication activities and people's behaviour. In the process of developing a place brand, one can turn to focus groups in order to identify values on which the brand can be constructed. Depending on the situation, groups can be homogeneous (for example, one group made up of residents, one of managers, one of politicians and opinion leaders) or heterogeneous (three mixed groups). Ideally, the depth of discussions between members of these groups will make it possible to list and evaluate deep-seated values that can then be used to develop the brand and narratives about it.

Individual interviews can be conducted when one wants to understand certain complex situations or attempt to identify coming changes. Interviews will be conducted with experts or persons who will take the time to answer questions, elaborate on their understanding of the situation, or propose solutions to problems.

In 2005, the Tetra Laval group decided to shut down half its plant at Romont, Switzerland, and abolish 130 out of 240 jobs, causing shockwaves in the region, the company being a major employer often cited as a reference point for industry. Although the reasons for the decision had been carefully explained by management, the population and the elites were concerned for the region's economic future. To identify the region's potential and marshal the strengths that would help it to bounce back, individual interviews were conducted with various political, economic, and media actors. Combined with other analyses, this study succeeded in rallying these actors around shared findings and drawing up a list of measures that would boost the region's attractiveness over time. As an example, the proposal to explore ideas about land use and create major industrial zones, particularly by purchasing parcels of land bordering a railway track, fostered economic development. In 2015, Nespresso, a company known around the world for its coffee pods, inaugurated a new production centre. The availability of a large area of serviced land connected to the railway was one of the main reasons the company chose this site, a move that was important in terms of jobs but also for the region's notoriety.

Content analyses can be used to analyse the information gathered during these interviews. They involve a systematic, methodical analysis of texts and visual documents (for example, all the articles on an organisation that have appeared in

the newspapers of the country). This is normally a four-step process. The first step consists in gathering all the documents and sorting them (type of newspaper, type of article, etc.). Documents are then coded based on the study topic (length, word frequency, relationship between topics, arguments put forward, etc.). The third step consists in structuring and analysing these basic results (for example, the relationship between the type of newspaper and the arguments put forward) using either graphs or matrices. In the last step, results are interpreted to bring out strong trends, relationships between diverse variables, or the causes of certain observations.

Analyses of this type are usually quite lengthy and require considerable resources, even though computer programmes facilitate the coding and analysis of information. Their use is beneficial when the mass of documents is sufficient and available.

Quantitative methods

Quantitative surveys are aimed at measuring or evaluating phenomena in such a way that the results can be extrapolated to the entire target population (for example, surveying a sample of tourists in order to assess the opinion of all tourists). These surveys are conducted on a large number of persons (representative sample), and the data gathered must be able to be aggregated easily. For the purpose, a structured questionnaire made up of a limited number of closed questions (preestablished list of possible answers) is used. The results are analysed using statistical tools.

Quantitative surveys can be conducted in varied forms, including personal (face-to-face), telephone, postal, and, in recent years, online surveys. Although online surveys can be planned and constructed very easily (software is available to put together online questionnaires without difficulty), conducting them professionally is quite a complex business. On the one hand, unless one has a list of persons in the target population and can obtain prior information by email (with a link to the questionnaire), it is very difficult to obtain representative samples that are chosen in truly random fashion—particularly since a significant part of the population has no private access to the Internet. On the other hand, although questionnaires can be constructed easily, they are also very easy to answer without thinking carefully (respondents can click on answers without having read or understood the questions) and easy to abandon without having answered all the questions. As long as one has information about the target population, online surveys can easily replace postal surveys and, in certain cases, telephone surveys. This is because, despite the difficulties mentioned, the advantages of online surveys in terms of rapid execution, instant capture of answers, and the possibility of presenting various elements to be tested at lower cost make them a preferred form of investigation.

Telephone surveys (also called CATI, for computer-assisted telephone interview) are also used frequently because they can be conducted quickly, offer a degree of flexibility in proposing questions based on answers already obtained, make it possible to control the structure of the sample, and prevent possible bias due to the presence of an interviewer. They can also be checked to ensure a sufficient level of quality. Conversely, because of their proliferation, we are seeing a decreasing response rate, and, if one does not have a list of the entire target population beforehand, it is becoming increasingly difficult to be sure of obtaining

a representative sample (some people do not disclose their telephone number or block calls from numbers on national “do not call” lists, some only have a mobile telephone number, and some have no telephone). Telephone surveys should have questions that are simple (complex topics cannot be dealt with on the phone) and limited in number (unless prior agreement is obtained, a telephone interview should not last longer than 10–15 minutes).

If the subject of the study is more complex (delicate topic or many possible answers, for example) or requires showing documents (sketch of a mock-up, logos, etc.), then a personal survey is preferred. This form of survey, usually conducted after making an appointment (a street survey cannot provide good sample representativeness), requires time and is expensive (investigator travel and interview duration). In addition, one must reckon with the fact that some groups of the population are very difficult to reach (young people, immigrant communities, etc.) and that experienced investigators are required.

Although rarely used because of low response rates, a postal survey is useful when those surveyed have a close relationship with the organisation commissioning the survey (survey of members of an association, for example). This form of survey is very economical if one has the addresses of the target population but is also very convenient for respondents, who can choose when to respond and take the time needed to give considered answers (no pressure from an interviewer). However, since no form of control is possible (one cannot tell who actually completed the questionnaire or whether the respondent checked any boxes by mistake), this form of survey can only be used with people who have sufficient knowledge of the written language and are capable of completing a questionnaire without help.

Box 14.2 presents an interesting case study from Finland. A survey was conducted in connection with the country’s admission to NATO.

Box 14.2 Analysis of the Finland brand

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland commissioned a study on the country’s brand, Finland’s visibility, and digital demand in the summer of 2022. A survey was conducted in ten countries, including the US, China, and Russia. This study is particularly relevant in the context of Finland’s application for NATO membership. Overall, Finland is favourably associated with important current causes such as global warming, poverty, clean energy, inequalities and injustice, peace, and safety (see Figure 14.6).

In answer to the question “Can you name an event from Finland?”, 72% of respondents recalled news and events about Finland, and 49% named NATO as the main topic and top-of-mind event. Other themes associated with Finland are “International relations and aid” (12%), “Cultural programme” (6%), and sustainability policies and actions (6%). Perceptions are improving in all countries, as can be seen in Figure 14.7. As a result, Finland’s application for NATO membership does not seem to be having a negative impact on the image of the country, even in Russia and China.

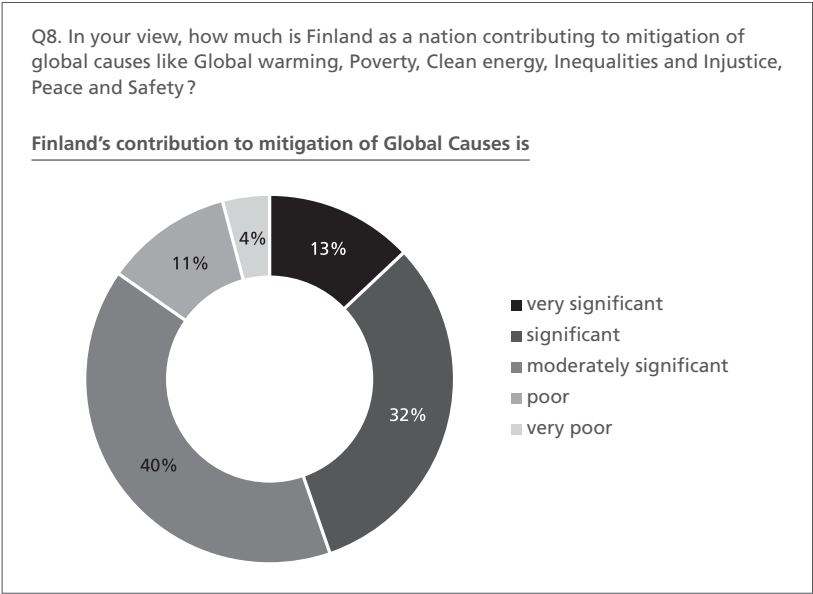


Figure 14.6 Contribution to mitigation of global causes

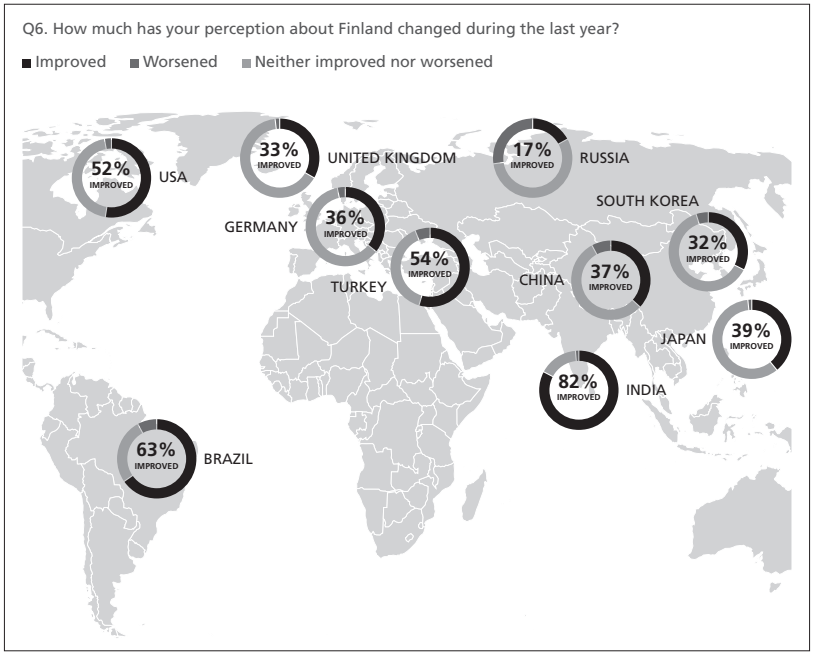


Figure 14.7 Perceptions about Finland

Source: www.visitfinland.fi/4919e8/contentassets/af36c1e2b7f44f0dadede2198b4d79abe/kam-ras-laura-finlands-nation-brand-and-changes-in-perception-15.12.2022.pdf

In the literature or on the Internet, it is easy to find study results that present a favourable image of a country or region, but only rarely do places draw attention to the effect of scandals or a tarnishing of their image to explain a fall in their attractiveness. Corruption, political conflicts, bad behaviour by residents, and so on are factors that can have a negative impact on the image of a country or region and are very difficult to offset by means of communications.

Another possible form is observation. Methods of this type are aimed at observing people's behaviour without their needing to express themselves. Of course, observation techniques do not allow the gathering of opinions, but they are in general much more reliable than surveys for studying behaviour due to the fact that possible filters in statements are absent. Although observation techniques have not been greatly used until now, technological and computer developments (digital information, Internet, GPS, electronic cameras, etc.), combined using artificial intelligence, have led to a considerable upsurge in interest, and specific new techniques have emerged in recent years.

14.6 Evaluation process

Figure 14.8 shows an evaluation process for place-promotion strategies and measures in summary form.

Any successful evaluation begins with clarification of the objectives of the strategy and/or measures planned and carried out. This is because unless actors' intentions and the objectives are accurately identified, an inappropriate method could be chosen and the results may not correspond to needs. At best, such a situation renders the evaluation useless; at worst, it creates tensions between the actors concerned, especially if results fall below their expectations. The greater the clarity, the easier it will be to formulate an evaluation concept. A promotional strategy aimed generally at improving a place's image will be very difficult to evaluate without further details as to target groups, dimensions of the image to be considered, or expectations as to quantifying the improvement. In such a case, any quantitative or qualitative data providing even a hint of an improvement in the image can be used to attest to the soundness of the strategy—or to criticise it.

The second step in an evaluation consists of determining information carriers, who will be either interviewed or asked for specific information. Information carriers may be persons or businesses, but they may also be documents or data, such as media or social-media posts. Take the example of a strategy aimed at increasing the attractiveness of a city to tourists by means of a communication campaign; an attractive hotel accommodation offer; and a package of museum entries, public transport, and discounts in city stores. Will tourists, hoteliers, merchants, or tourists be questioned? Ideally, all of them, except that an eye must be kept on the economics of the evaluation. A combination of information provided by hoteliers (number and origin of tourists) and the tourism office regarding the number of packages sold could provide useful indications of the effectiveness of these measures. In selecting information carriers, consideration must be given to the feasibility of contacting and questioning these persons or businesses, to the

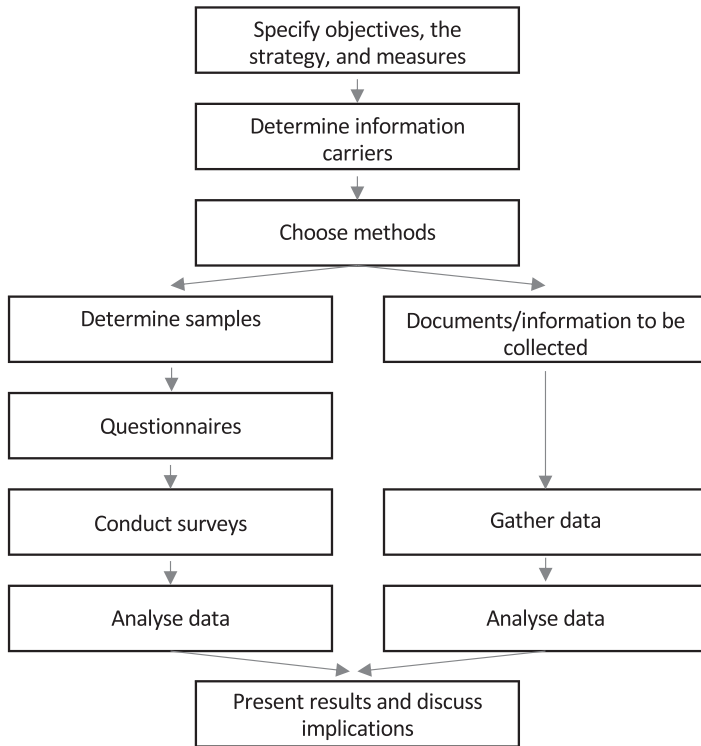


Figure 14.8 Process for evaluating a place-development strategy

quality of information they may provide, and to their relevance with regard to the chosen criteria or indicators.

The next step is the choice of method. With reference to the methods presented previously, one must first check whether it is possible to find relevant information that already exists or is easy to obtain (use of secondary data or documents that can be gathered). In the negative, information will be sought through interviews or observations. There is often a strong temptation to carry out quantitative surveys of samples (of hoteliers or merchants, of tourists whose email addresses have been collected, of business managers, etc.). Determining the sample involves requirements that are frequently neglected, such as existence of a target population, a random selection of persons, and, if applicable, the selection of quotas that are useful for research. If we wanted to find out what reasons prompted companies to set up in a given region over the past five years, we might, for example, decide to have four groups of companies based on their size (quota), since the reasons are likely to differ depending on whether the company is large or very small. We would then make sure to obtain specific samples for the type of companies that interest us. The difficulty of securing a sufficient response rate and of obtaining information useful for evaluating strategies is often underestimated.

If we proceed using interviews, a questionnaire will need to be developed. Documents will then be gathered with regard to interviews conducted using questionnaires. All the data gathered will then be analysed and form the subject of a presentation. Finally, one must not forget to organise a discussion in order to learn lessons from the evaluation process.

Notes

- 1 Le Temps, 16.11.2016, viewed on 11.04.2023; Le Figaro, 12.01.2017, viewed on 11.04.2023.
- 2 See, for instance, Nick Ryan, “Performance Management in Public Sector Organisations”. www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/professional-exams-study-resources/p5/technical-articles/Benchmarking-targets-publicsector.html.
- 3 An example: the PISA study (Programme for International Student Assessment) is an international assessment introduced by the OECD to test and compare the skills of students aged 15.
- 4 <https://memphisbrand.org/> (viewed on 14 April 2023).
- 5 www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/publication/documents/2021-05/Anholt-Ipsos.pdf.

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15 Conclusion



In the beginning, there was a territory, a population, and a political system.

Whether we are talking about a city, a region, or a country, each place is different from the others, with its own geographical characteristics, history, and resources. Venice is unique! You can invest as much money as you like and reproduce this city in an amusement park, but you will never be able to copy its particular atmosphere, smells, the charm of the gondolas and their *gondolieri*, or the Italian bars where you drink espresso standing up and do not order a cappuccino from midday onwards. Amsterdam may be the Venice of the North, Strasbourg the Little Venice, Bruges the Little Venice of the North, and Yanagawa the Venice of Kyushu. But these cities have other characteristics and will never be Venice. While it is easy to talk about these famous cities, we never or only rarely mention numerous places that have virtually nothing to make them stand out from others.

A place is home to a population with its own history, values, level of education, degree of openness to others, communities, and social structure. For instance, no one forces Thai people to smile, even though they may be sad or tired. However, these positive facial expressions certainly play a part in the country's image and its success as a popular tourist destination. Political systems and choices also matter significantly: the development and evolution of places are also shaped by political systems that can be democratic or authoritarian, with all the grey areas in between. These systems induce political choices that are decisive for the lives of residents and businesses alike. How stable are political decisions? What are the tax rates? What investments are made in training and childcare? What is the crime rate, how is it assessed, and how is it addressed? What kind of company would want to (re)locate in a place with major political risks, a corrupt financial system, a poorly trained population, and obstacles to the repatriation of dividends?

These preliminary remarks are necessary to contextualise the discussion around place branding and marketing. In this regard, one of the main objectives of our book is to show that it is impossible to address issues of place promotion without looking at the concrete situation of a place, especially its public policies, available resources, and policy choices. This does not mean that nothing can be done in terms of communication and marketing but that promotional actions must not be isolated from places' institutional features and political choices. However, the place-branding and -marketing literature often overlooks these aspects, as shown

by the recent contribution by Swain et al. (2023). Their extensive review of papers related to place branding ($N = 112$) focuses on the antecedents, mediators, and consequences of the concept. It highlights the importance of topics such as the role played by stakeholders, brand attributes, attitudes towards the brand, intentions to visit, and so on but never raises the policy perspective on any of these issues. While we do not underestimate the importance of these aspects, we firmly believe that the policy angle should be more thoroughly addressed in future contributions on place branding and marketing.

No situation is set in stone, but it is an illusion to think that a new logo, brand promotion, or intensive marketing activities will profoundly change a region's situation in the long term. It is only by integrating promotional considerations into political decision-making processes, and by ensuring that promotion is strongly integrated with public policies, that places can strengthen their attractiveness. An area that is depopulating, or needs additional manpower to support its economic development, will certainly need to ensure affordable housing, high-quality child-care facilities, efficient public services, a policy for integrating new arrivals, and a safe environment. Otherwise, people may leave as quickly as they came. In the future, the coordination of public policies on a territorial scale and the integration of place-promotion considerations will be decisive for attracting and keeping companies that offer jobs and pay taxes on their profits, for ensuring that the resident population feels comfortable, and, if tourism is important, for ensuring that it makes a lasting contribution to the place's development.

The development of place branding and marketing in the context of place promotion from the end of the 20th century onwards (Vuignier, 2017) results from increased competition between countries, regions, and cities. With the globalisation of trade and mobility (barriers to the movement of goods and people have been reduced), places are competing to attract businesses, talents, or tourists. As mentioned in Chapter 3, attractiveness and competitiveness are two sides of the same coin. A region must be attractive to be competitive. However, it is important to identify the factors that make a region attractive and to determine whether these factors really enable it to be competitive in a specific environment and in relation to a given set of objectives. The development of high-level training institutions, making a place potentially more attractive to its residents, does not necessarily mean that it will be more competitive. Indeed, if jobs are not created for people who obtain diplomas, they will have to leave, moving elsewhere to find a job that matches their skills and expectations.

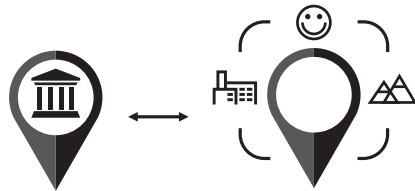
The final element of complexity when addressing place branding and marketing is the often-explained opposition between the two concepts. Once again, and with reference to the marketing literature, these are in fact two sides of the same coin. What place will be able to convince businesses, residents, and tourists to locate, live, or visit if it is not known and lacks visibility, if its image is tainted by negative perceptions, or if it is confused with others? Branding, with its ability to convey identity and values, is also fundamental for places that seek to develop or maintain their attractiveness. However, this is not enough; they also need to develop concrete marketing activities, propose offers, and mobilise local companies or specialised

agencies (tour operators in the tourism sector, for example). Otherwise, they run the risk of having a very good image but no concrete results. Figure 15.1 presents the three parameters of the equation, in line with Part I of this book.

All in all, the equation is quite simple, but it is not sufficiently commented on and explained in the current place-branding and -marketing literature.

If we accept these three parameters, it becomes quite clear that if we want to understand the promotion of a place, we need to understand the notion of place, know who the stakeholders in the corresponding decisions and actions are, be able

- Integrate and coordinate the promotion of a place with public policies,



- enhance attractiveness to improve competitiveness,



- and finally consider that branding and marketing are inseparable.



Figure 15.1 The key dimensions of place promotion

to set priorities, and finally know the tools available to take action (see Part II, Chapters 5–8), as shown in Figure 15.2.

Although contributions on place branding and marketing tend to deal with these themes in a homogeneous way, the reality around the world is characterised by a diversity of situations and approaches. This diversity, which adds to the complexity of the issues addressed in this book, is illustrated in Chapters 9–12 and in various boxes throughout the book, with external contributions and examples from every continent, country, region, and city.

And, finally, action is certainly necessary, but not in a standardised approach, since the particularities or key elements presented previously should always be considered. Action should also be launched and sustained in a long-term perspective, and political ambitions should ideally be dissociated from place-promotion projects. Also, any prioritisation process and strategy must be accompanied by a process of implementation and evaluation (Figure 15.3).

The choices made in terms of priorities and tools need to be carefully implemented and then evaluated. And evaluations must serve to correct decisions taken upstream. In the future, the promotion of places will require stronger integration of intentions and objectives with public policies, taking into account the complexity of places and seeking original solutions more closely tailored to places' characteristics.

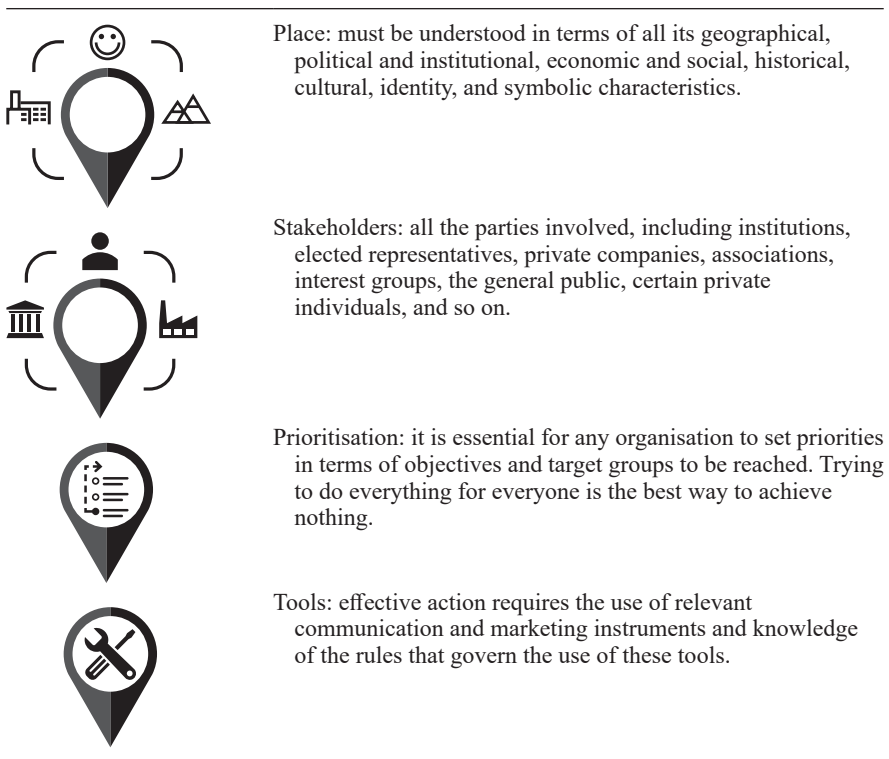


Figure 15.2 The key elements of place analysis

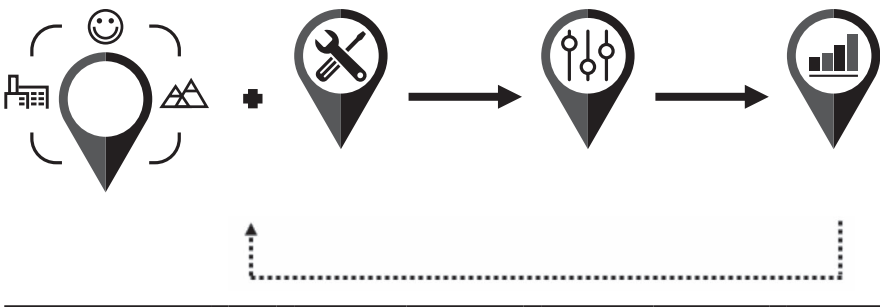


Figure 15.3 Strategy, implementation, and evaluation

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