

Chapter 2

Rethinking the Place Branding Construct

Graham Hankinson

Abstract The emerging convergence between the disciplines contributing to the development of place branding as a field of study has led to a more holistic view of the subject, broadening the research platform and encouraging the publication of future research agendas. Nevertheless, place branding research has only just begun to take account of the significant deepening and broadening of the mainstream branding domain. Greater conceptual understanding of branding concepts is required before place branding can be regarded as a mature domain of study. This chapter delineates the place branding construct by identifying the concepts that form and reflect it and the variables that moderate its implementation and impact. The chapter begins with a review of the mainstream branding construct in order to identify concepts of relevance to place branding. On the basis of this analysis seven concepts which are central to the place branding construct are proposed: the brand image, positioning and equity, brand extension, brand architecture, brand identity and orientation. Secondly, three moderating variables are identified: brand objectives, brand management and performance measurement. Issues of transference are then discussed.

Introduction

Place brands exist in various forms (e.g., in the branding of nations, cities, regions and tourism destinations) and there is no doubt that it is now well-established as an area of academic study. Despite its long history, it was not until the last quarter of the twentieth century that articles on place branding began to appear in the academic literature (Kavaratzis 2005; Pike 2009). A recent study by Lucarelli and Berg (2011) highlights, in particular, the rapid expansion in the number of articles published on

G. Hankinson (✉)

Kingston Business School, Kingston University London, Kingston Hill Campus,
Kingston upon Thames KT2 7LB, UK
e-mail: g.hankinson@kingston.ac.uk

place branding over the period 1988–2009. These appeared predominantly in urban studies, tourism and geography journals, and more recently in marketing journals. The latter combined mainstream branding theory with academic literature from the other three disciplines which hitherto, had largely ignored both mainstream branding theory and each other. As a result of this emerging convergence, it has been suggested that “the focus of discussion for place branding has shifted ... to business and marketing” as the dominant perspective (Hanna and Rowley 2008, p. 69). This claim may be contested, but there can be no doubt that these cross-disciplinary synergies have led to a more holistic view of place branding. They have helped to develop place branding theory which has, in turn, provided a broader platform for further study and accelerated the process of research (Dinnie 2004; Kavaratzis 2005; Hankinson 2007). This progress has encouraged the publication of a series of future research agendas (for example, Pike 2009; Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2008; Dinnie 2008; Balakrishnan 2009; Hankinson 2010a) and the development of a more critical perspective of place branding and marketing (Gertner 2011a, b).

This suggests that, although there is considerable potential for further interdisciplinary synergy, there is some way to go before place branding can be regarded as a mature academic domain. In particular, place branding research has only just begun to take account of the significant deepening and broadening of the mainstream branding domain which has taken place.

Furthermore, future synergy will also be inhibited by continuing confusion in the literature as regards terminology. Thus, in the foreword to the first issue of *Place Branding and Public Policy*, Anholt (2004, p. 4) suggested that “almost nobody agrees on what, exactly, place branding means”. Although this may no longer be true, terms such as location, country, nation, region and city have frequently been selected in preference to place rather than being recognised as alternative manifestations of place (Lodge 2004; Hanna and Rowley 2008). This has, it may be argued, prolonged the compartmentalisation of place branding and inhibited domain unification. Several authors (e.g. Kavaratzis and Hatch 2013) also point out that the term place branding continues to be confused with the term place marketing, failing to recognise that branding is a subset of marketing. Such conceptual confusions are, of course, part of the evolution of a relatively immature discipline such as place branding, reflecting, in particular the subject’s multi-disciplinary origins. Nevertheless, greater understanding of the place branding concepts forming and reflecting the place branding construct is required before place branding can be regarded as a coherent domain of academic study (Skinner 2008).

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to delineate the place branding construct by identifying both the concepts that form and reflect the content of this construct and the variables that impact on its implementation. The chapter begins with a review of the mainstream branding construct—its growth and conceptual development—in order to identify the concepts of relevance to place branding. The conclusions from this analysis are then set in the context of the existing and future conceptual development of place branding. Finally, variables that are problematic in the implementation of place branding and issues of conceptual transference are examined.

The Conceptual Development of Mainstream Branding

Branding's use as a modern business tool can be traced back to the end of the nineteenth century (Low and Fullerton 1994). Several substantive reviews of these developments have appeared in the academic press in recent years (see for example Low and Fullerton 1994; de Chernatony and Dall'Olmio Riley 1998; Louro and Cunha 2001).

Branding theory, which first emerged in the 1950s, was initially developed in the context of consumer products. However, increasing understanding of branding and the associated addition of new concepts has followed the extension of branding practice beyond its consumer product foundations. Thus, during the 1990s branding was increasingly applied to brand-owning corporations in addition to their products. While much of the academic work in this area has so far been conceptual, it is clear that corporate brands are different from product brands. First, they frequently play an overarching role with respect to a set of sub-brands. Secondly, responsibility for their management rests with the senior management team. Thirdly, they reflect the organisational culture of their owners. Fourthly, they are required to manage a wide range of stakeholders, not just consumers. Finally, in order to grow, they are increasingly required to work in partnership with other corporations.

In parallel with the growth in corporate branding, attention also turned to the branding of services, the majority of which, it is worth noting, have corporate names. *Services brands* like corporate brands are dependent on a supportive corporate culture (Hatch and Schultz 2003) in order to deliver brand values effectively. Thus, people and processes become central to the successful delivery of service brands (de Chernatony and Segal-Horn 2001). However, services also have certain unique characteristics, in particular intangibility, which gives service brands a distinctive role to play as providers of physical evidence and pre-purchase information about the brand experience (Keller 1998; Zeithaml and Bitner 2000; Hankinson 2010b).

We have also seen a similar trend in the application of branding to non-profit organisations (Ewing and Napoli 2005). This has included for example, charities, social services and health organisations (Balabanis et al. 1997; Hankinson 2000). However, the application of branding in non-profit sectors is made more complex as a result of its unusual exchange process. Unlike the commercial sector in which value is exchanged directly between the consumer and the branding organisation, in non-profit sectors, the branding organisation is frequently not the direct beneficiary of the value created by the brand. Such complexities, of course, have inevitably attracted academic interest and, as a result, non-profit branding, of which place branding is arguably a part, is now a well-established academic area (Hankinson 2004).

In parallel with this broadening in the application of branding to new areas there has been a corresponding deepening in the conceptual understanding of branding. A timeline of the development and inter-relationships between the various stages of this conceptual development is set out in Fig. 2.1. This figure denotes the times when publications first appeared.

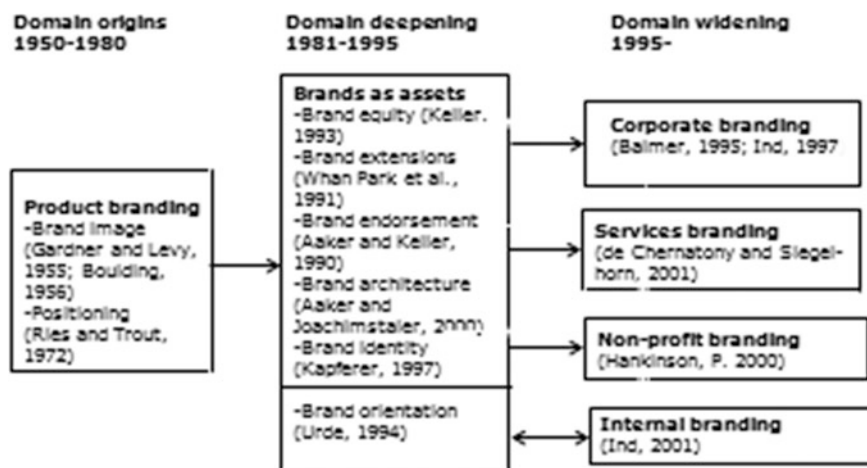


Fig. 2.1 The development of mainstream branding—a timeline (Source Author)

Brand Image and Positioning

Image

Articles on branding did not appear in the academic press until the 1950s. These began the continuing debate about the concepts which formed and reflected the content of the branding construct. As a result, brands became more than just a means of product identification, the principal purpose for which they had hitherto been used. Early articles argued instead that a brand was not only a tangible product identifier but also an intangible symbolic image (Gardner and Levy 1955; Boulding 1956). Thus, Gardner and Levy (1955, p. 35) wrote that a brand name was “a complex symbol” that represented “a variety of ideas and attributes... built up and acquired as a public object over a period of time”. Further, they suggested that the image represented by this complex symbol may be more important than the ‘technical’ qualities of the product and that advertising should therefore seek to differentiate the brand by focusing on feelings about the brand rather than on the product’s functional or technical merits. As such, brands needed to emphasise emotional rather than functional associations as the principal competitive differentiators (Gardner and Levy 1955).

Since these early papers, research into the nature of brand images has continued and a general consensus has emerged. This suggests that brand images consist of two categories of associations: functional and symbolic (de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley 1998); although some authors add a third category, that of experiential associations (e.g., Park et al. 1986; Keller 1998), which are particularly relevant in the case of services.

Positioning

Further conceptual developments followed as the marketplaces of the late 1960s became increasingly crowded and competition intensified (Low and Fullerton 1994). Thus, in the early 1970s, Ries and Trout (1972) added the concept of brand positioning to the brand construct. The basic idea of positioning was that brands should not attempt to compete ‘head on’ with competitors via ‘me-too’ brands, but rather seek to create unique positions in consumers’ minds through specific brand associations targeted at clearly defined segments (Ries and Trout 1981).

Brands as Assets

The 1980s was a crucial turning point in the development of brands (Kapferer 1997), following a series of take-overs of large brand-owning companies by other brand-owning companies. These take-overs, which occurred across several countries, highlighted the financial value of brands. For example in 1988, the Swiss company, Nestle, acquired Rowntree Mackintosh, a UK company with tangible assets of £300 million and a pre-bid capital value of £1 billion, for £2.3 billion, after a hard-fought battle with a close competitor, Jacobs-Souchard. The excess value placed upon Rowntree by Nestle represented an evaluation of Rowntree’s intangible assets which included their brands.

Brand Equity

The Rowntree’s case and others like it fuelled a debate about the value of brands (their brand equity) and whether financial valuations could be put into company balance sheets, a debate which spilled over into academic marketing journals (e.g., Barwise et al. 1989). The debate on financial brand equity however, lost momentum when it became clear that the practice of accounting for brands in company balance sheets was not acceptable to professional accounting bodies, particularly in Europe and the USA. Nevertheless the debate continued in the form of Customer-based Brand Equity (CBBE). This concept, which represented the value placed on brands from a consumer perspective, was first discussed in a seminal article by Keller (1993), in which he defined the term as “the effect of brand knowledge on consumer’s response to the brand” (p. 8), where consumers’ brand knowledge was defined in terms of brand awareness, favorability, strength, uniqueness and the relevance of their brand associations as reflected in the brand’s image. This concept continues to develop as understanding of its meaning and measurement grows (for further developments see Keller 1998.)

Brand Extension

Recognition of the value of brands led companies to focus more closely on longer term brand strategies (Hankinson and Cowking 1993) and enhanced the attraction of brand acquisition as a means of establishing and growing market share in new markets more rapidly. Once acquired, brands became the basis for brand extensions, a strategy whereby successful brand names were used to endorse other, less well known brands in order to enhance sales growth (Aaker and Keller 1990; Park et al. 1986). Through this process of brand endorsement, consumers' positive perceptions of successful brands could be transferred to newly launched or acquired brands, reducing purchasers' risks and cutting the speed and costs of new product launches (Park et al. 1986; Aaker and Keller 1990). Thus, when Nestlé, acquired the UK confectionery company, Rowntree-Mackintosh, the owner of well-known UK brands such as Smarties, Kit-Kat and Quality Street, Nestlé used its corporate brand to add value to the newly acquired UK product brands through association with its globally recognised brand and thereby, leverage international sales growth.

Brand Architecture

The increasing number of brand acquisitions and brand extensions led to more complex brand portfolios and the need to manage an organisation's brands more effectively (Aaker and Joachimstaler 2000; Devlin 2003). Brand architecture was the response to this problem. It is an organisation's approach to the design and management of its brand portfolio (Devlin 2003). Building a coherent brand architecture became a key component of a firm's overall marketing strategy, providing a structure within which to launch brands into new markets, as well as providing a framework within which newly acquired brands could be integrated across markets (Douglas et al. 2001). Brand architecture could also provide guidance on brand support and the allocation of resources across increasingly diverse international markets (Kapferer 1997). It also provided a structure within which issues, such as which brands should play overarching roles and how many sub-brands should they support, could be addressed.

Brand Identity

Recognition of the value of brands raised the management level at which brands were managed (Kapferer 1997; Keller 1998). Brands now became part of corporate strategy and the responsibility of senior management. This in turn, led large multi-brand organisations to communicate their corporate brand to a wider range of stakeholders and in particular, shareholders (Keller and Aaker 1992; de Chernatony

and Dall’Olmo Riley 1998; Ind 1997). As a result, companies now had to consider more carefully the kind of identity they wanted to communicate. This view of the brand is eloquently argued by Kapferer (1997), who suggested that knowing what brands stands for from a company perspective (brand identity), should guide long term corporate brand communications and take precedence over the short term management of individual product brand images. As strategic assets, brand identities became part of the inventory of organisational assets and competencies (Urde 1999).

Brand Orientation

As such, responsibility for brands could no longer be left to the marketing department alone (Kapferer 1997; Keller 1998). Increasingly all employees were encouraged to take responsibility for the corporate brand through an internal branding process by which senior management communicated their brand’s values to all staff, not only those directly involved with customers (Ind 2001; de Chernatony and Segal-Horn 2001; Hatch and Schultz 2003; Hankinson 2009). Corporate culture was also made more brand-centric through the organisation’s recruitment processes by selecting new employees who reflected the values of the brand (Hatch and Schulz 2003). This practice formed the basis of the wider concept of brand orientation—a managerial approach “in which the processes of the organisation revolve around the creation, development and protection of brand identity...” (Urde 1999, p. 117). This required a re-orientation of all organisational processes around the corporate brand and a move from individual brand strategies towards brand-based strategies (Merrilees et al. 2005).

The Mainstream Branding Construct

On the basis of the above discussion, it is argued that the seven factors discussed above (a brand’s image, positioning, equity, extension, architecture and identity together with brand orientation) represent the basic concepts of the mainstream branding construct. Nevertheless, it is recognised that the conceptual development of branding will continue as the practice of branding develops. However, as a consequence of differences in the management and value creation models underpinning place branding, transference of some of these concepts from the commercial sector to non-profit sectors such as place branding can sometimes be problematic.

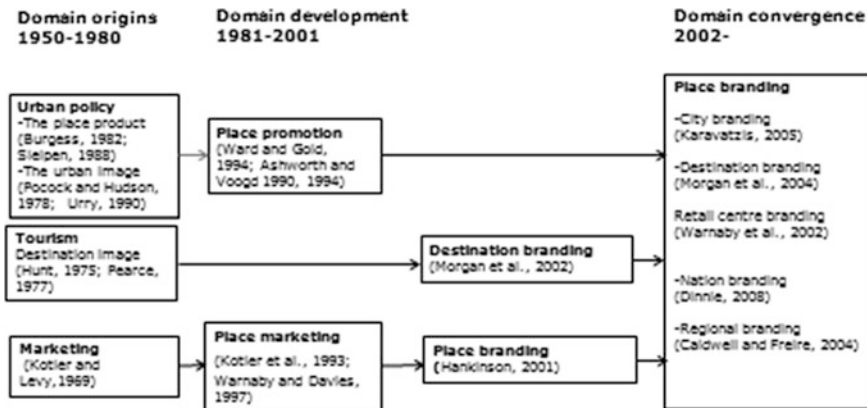


Fig. 2.2 The development of place branding—a timeline (Source Author)

The Conceptual Development of Place Branding

The origins of place branding have been well documented (e.g., Ward 1998; Kearns and Philo 1993; Ward and Gold 1994). Early academic interest came principally from the perspectives of urban policy and tourism. However, these domains, for a long period of time, worked independently of each other and with little reference to mainstream marketing. Borchert (1994) notes, with reference to the early place promotion literature that “there exists only a weak relation with modern developments in marketing theory”. Since the turn of the century however, inter-disciplinary convergence has begun and common conceptual development is emerging.

Figure 2.2 provides a time-line of the development of place branding beginning with early papers in the urban policy literature, focused on the distinctive nature of the place product (see for example, Sleipen 1988; Ashworth and Voogd 1990, 1994; Burgess 1982; Urry 1990). However, it is argued here that these factors do not form part of the place branding construct but should rather be treated as factors which moderate both the management and the outcome of place branding, issues which are discussed later in this chapter. The focus here is upon the transferability of concepts from mainstream branding to place branding.

Place Image and Positioning

Image

Early literature in both the urban policy and the tourism domains to varying degrees, focused on place image promotion. However, several of these publications, notably in the urban policy domain (see, for example Hunt 1975; Pearce 1977;

Burgess 1990) were highly critical of this so-called “commodification” of places (Urry 1990). As a consequence, image research was predominantly, but not exclusively (see for example, Hunt 1975; Pearce 1977), in the tourism domain, focusing on destination images. Pike (2002) reviews 142 destination image papers. However, while this work on place image formation models is recognised (See for example Echtner and Richie 1993; Gartner 1993), they contain very little reference to mainstream branding literature (Kavaratzis 2005; Hankinson 2010a). Also, both destination and place image research has, until recently, tended to be case study based, focusing on individual places rather than cross-sectional studies. This has limited the development of a general theory of place image.

Transition from place image promotion towards the broader concept of place branding began in the latter part of the twentieth century beginning with papers by mainstream branding authors (e.g., Kotler et al. 1993, 1999; Hankinson 2001). From a tourism perspective, this was followed by (Morgan and Pritchard 2002) and continued from a mainstream branding perspective, by Hankinson (2004, 2005). These publications suggested that place images consisted of largely functional and experiential (ambience related) associations in contrast to the predominantly functional and symbolic associations which characterise mainstream brand images. From a tourism perspective, work has also focused on the relationship between destination image and image congruity (Sirgy 1982; Sirgy and Su 2000).

Positioning

In the context of tourism, few papers address the issue of positioning, particularly in the important context of brand competition (Pike 2009; Pike and Ryan 2004). Pike (2009) reviews 74 tourism articles published between 1998 and 2007 and identifies the need for further research particularly into multiple positioning which addresses questions such as how many activities can one place effectively represent without causing customer confusion and perceptual dilution. Thus, larger places can offer a wider range of activities that enable them to support several positionings; but this requires more complex brand messages (Hankinson 2009). Pike (2009, p. 8) also suggests positioning is frequently driven by political rivalries between local vested political interests and argues for the need to further understand the impact of positioning strategies on the attitudes of local communities. More recently, work by Zenker and Beckman (2013) has examined the role which residents can play as brand ambassadors and the impact this can have on positioning.

From an urban policy perspective, Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2008) argue for the need to research all stakeholders’ roles in the development of a place’s positioning. In particular, they emphasise the need for local communities to be consulted in the positioning decision and to support it. At the same time, Hankinson (2009) found some place brand organisations (PBOs) consulting with residents and other stakeholders as a means of identifying potential positioning strategies.

Place Brands as Assets

Brand Equity

Since 2000, the implications of brands as assets has begun to be explored in the place branding literature (see, for example, Balakrishnan 2009; Merrilees et al. 2005; Trueman et al. 2004). The customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model (Keller 1993, 1998) has attracted particular interest and has been used as a measure of destination brand performance (for example, Konecnik 2006; Konecnik and Gartner 2007; Pike 2007). Pike (2009), nevertheless, sees brand equity, as a research gap, suggesting that its use as a performance tool should be extended to include place brand loyalty and the tracking of re-branding and re-positioning strategies. In the context of urban policy, Kavaratzis (2005) links brand equity to brand identity as well as performance measurement. The increasing importance of place brand equity is also evidenced by special issues in academic journals (e.g. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 10 (2), 2014) devoted to the topic.

Brand Identity

In the context of tourism, the need for destinations to create unique identities which differentiate their brands from the competition is emphasised by Morgan and Pritchard (1999). Similarly, Dinnie (2008) concludes that there is considerable scope for more imaginative input into the development of nation brand identity, suggesting as an example, the possibility of including ideological associations such as sustainability. Pike (2009) highlights the political difficulties in doing this and calls for in-depth case studies of the politics of destination brand decision-making. The key issue here is the impact of internal conflicts between local authority departments and external conflicts between stakeholder organisations and groups. Such conflicts are seen as having the potential to inhibit the development of a common brand identity. The problem of political conflict is reflected also in work by Hankinson (2001, 2004b) who criticises the practice of developing separate brands for individual areas of activity within the same place rather than the development of unified place brands. Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) similarly argue for a better understanding of the relationship between place identity and place brands and the balance of stakeholder involvement in the development of brand identity and its management.

Brand Architecture

The importance of brand architecture is highlighted in a study of 25 PBOs by Hankinson (2010a) which identifies this as a common theme of concern amongst place branding practitioners. Rainisto (2003) suggests that, just as corporate brands

play an overarching/umbrella role as regards individual product brands, by adding value through endorsement, strong place brand can play a key role in brand architecture by adding value through their association with less well-known brands. From a tourism perspective, Pike (2009) includes umbrella branding as a research gap, in particular, as regards their success. Iversen and Hem (2008) analyse the nature of umbrella brands and their role in the promotion of countries, regions and cities. In the context of country branding, Dinnie (2008) points to future growth and interest in the role of co-branding when countries bid to host major international events. Discussion of the role of brand architecture in the context of tourism can also be found in (Morgan and Pritchard 2002).

Brand Orientation

There is very little evidence of internal branding by PBOs and there are only a limited number of articles on place brand orientation and brand culture. As a result Anholt (2002) argues for more research into the role of brand orientation in the place branding area. Nevertheless, several papers have been published on brand orientation in the non-profit sector literature (for example, studies by Hankinson P. 2000, 2004c; Ewing and Napoli 2005). There have also been at least two papers published in the place branding literature (Hankinson 2009, 2012). These papers have adapted the concept of brand orientation and developed measurement scales based upon variables relevant to non-profit and place branding organisations. Hankinson (2012) suggests that brand orientation must begin with cultural change within both the PBO and the organisations who deliver the brand experience, in order to ensure that employees and processes across stakeholder organisations are focused on the place brand's values. This requires partnerships and commitment to the place brand to ensure the brand is communicated consistently (Hankinson 2009). In a review of the corporate branding literature, Kavaratzis (2005) draws attention to the important role of organisational culture in place brand delivery. Despite this work, place brand orientation remains a relatively under-researched area.

Brand Endorsement

Brand endorsement is not a subject which explicitly appears anywhere in the place branding literature. Indeed, there is little evidence of its explicit use in place branding practice. Nevertheless, in the context of tourism, well known place brands are used to promote less well known place brands, a strategy referred to as 'attack and slipstream' branding (see for example, Hankinson 2009, 2010a). Such strategies, it could be argued, are a form of place brand extension through endorsement (Pike 2009; Dinnie 2008) designed to maximise the value of branding within a

country or region. They increase a place brand's overall franchise in terms of services offered and levels of consumption. The potential for greater application of brand extension as a means of growing the place brand franchise justifies more thought and research.

The Place Branding Construct

While all the concepts which form and reflect the mainstream branding construct have, to varying degrees, become part of place branding practice, the above analysis suggests that there are significant variations in the extent to which these concepts have been the topic of academic publication. This, to some extent reflects problems of conceptual transference. In particular, the concept which seems least developed is brand extension. Nevertheless, despite the problems of transference it is reasonable to conclude that the core of both the mainstream branding and the place branding constructs are similar.

Moderating Variables

Despite the similarities between place brands and mainstream brands, it is important to remember that place branding has characteristics that distinguish it from mainstream branding and which have the potential to moderate the place branding process and its outcome. Recent research by Eshuis et al. (2013) confirms the concerns of earlier work in this area. In a survey of 274 public managers they concluded that, there are problems associated with the transference of classical marketing as well as political and administrative obstacles. These factors make place branding more complex than mainstream branding in three ways: setting the brand's objectives, managing the branding process and measuring brand performance.

Place Branding Objectives

Mainstream brands are owned by commercial sector organisations which are ultimately required to deliver value for their shareholders. These organisations however, also have to meet the needs of a wider group of stakeholders, for example, employees, suppliers, governments and regulatory agencies. In contrast, place brands, are located in the public sector and not owned by any organisation or group of shareholders. Nevertheless, they deliver value to groups of stakeholders including residents, who pay taxes, and local organisations which not only pay taxes, but also invest money on behalf of their shareholders to help finance place

brand development. The objective of place branding therefore, is not to maximise shareholder value but to maximise economic value and social welfare on behalf of local residents and other stakeholders. This model of value creation is indirect and more complex when compared to the model pertaining in the commercial sector. It is also more prone to conflict between stakeholder groups, each of whom has a vested interest in the brand's success, even though they do not share the PBO's economic and welfare objectives (Hankinson 2007).

Managing Place Branding

The effective management of place branding is made more difficult as a result of the network character of place brands (Hankinson 2004a) and the need to rely on other organisations to deliver the brand experience. Furthermore, mainstream brands are established and grown through a line management process, but place brand management is a facilitation process. The central issue for PBOs is therefore, how to accommodate the conflicting needs, priorities and expectations of their network of stakeholders who deliver and influence the brand experience, (Hankinson 2007). Poor 'management' by PBOs can result in the adoption of the lowest common denominator solution and limit the brand's role to communications and a focus on symbols, logos and publicity rather than brand delivery (Leitch and Richardson 2003). There is also evidence that the undue influence of dominant partners can lead to the abandonment of potentially effective brand strategies (Pike 2005). Facilitation of a balanced buy-in from stakeholder organisations and the support of residents, both of whom impact on the brand experience, is crucial (Curtis 2001). However, evidence also suggests that allowing more enthusiastic organisations to take a bigger role may generate economies of scale and effort.

There is support for further research into the area of stakeholder management, both from PBOs (see Hankinson 2010a) and from recently published research agendas (Pike 2009; Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2008; Dinnie 2008; Balakrishnan 2009). From an urban policy perspective, research agenda items include: the identification of more effective organisational structures and the role of coordinating bodies in place management (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2008). From a tourism perspective, Grangsjö (2003) suggests a comparison of the relative benefits of inter-urban cooperation rather than competition. From a mainstream marketing perspective, Hankinson (2004a) argues for more research into the role and structure of networks in the delivery of place brands.

Measuring Performance

The complex value creation process which characterises place branding also creates difficulties in the measurement of performance and brand equity (see also Zenker

and Braun this volume and Florek this volume). First, the benefits of strong place brands are shared between stakeholder organisations (including PBOs). Secondly, because these benefits are measured differently by different stakeholder groups they cannot be aggregated. For example, local governments measure benefits in terms of increases in tax revenues, hotels measure the benefits in terms of occupancy rates, while residents look for improved public services. These difficulties are compounded by elected members of local governments who represent residents' interests but whose composition changes regularly as part of the democratic process. Such political instability has the potential to destabilise place branding strategies.

Performance measurement of place branding is thus difficult, but nevertheless, essential (Hankinson 2010a). From a tourism perspective (Pike 2007, 2009) calls for a better understanding of place brand performance in general but in particular, as regards its impact on business competitiveness. From an urban policy perspective, Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2008) suggest that future research should examine the relationship between different indicators of place performance, not only changes in the perception of place image, but including also, citizen satisfaction indicators and financial returns. From a marketing perspective, Dinnie (2008) also calls for greater use of marketing metrics in place branding.

In addition to these moderators, there are other variables which can affect responses to place branding. It may reflect spatial scale, for example, as reflected in variations between countries, regions, cities and towns. Variations in response may also reflect differences in place positioning strategies, for example, differences in positioning based on tourism, financial services, retail and sport. This suggests the need to establish benchmarks for different types of place.

Conclusions

This analysis of the conceptual development of mainstream and place branding raises several important issues.

First, while mainstream branding has diverged into specialist domains, place branding is emerging as a domain through a process of convergence. While the launch of the *Journal of Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* provides concrete evidence of this convergence, a comparison of conceptual development in mainstream and place branding suggests that the overall rate of convergence and movement towards a fully developed domain is slow. With the exception of the significant volume of research into the concept of place image (notably in the tourism domain), articles relating to other concepts forming and reflecting the mainstream branding construct are still considerably less numerous. The analysis presented here suggests that place branding has however, been significantly strengthened by its links to mainstream branding. These have enabled the study of place branding to progress beyond its narrow focus on image towards the more rigorous introduction of mainstream branding concepts, allowing the place branding

domain to form and develop a common body of theory. As a result, researchers from across the place branding spectrum now recognise and cross-reference each other. Domain delineation however, is not yet complete. As Fig. 2.2 depicts, place branding is, at present, an umbrella term which encompasses the literature from at least five areas including the branding of cities, destinations, retail centres, nations and regions. But all of these share common problems as evidenced by the increasing amount of overlap between these contributions. For example, nation and regional branding is, to some extent conflated with destination branding (Anholt 2004; Hanna and Rowley 2008). Furthermore, destination and retail centre brands reflect alternative positionings rather than different types of place.

Secondly, while there has clearly been convergence, there remains a need for tighter specification of the concepts. Thus, it has been noted that some old concepts such as place promotion remain, alongside new concepts such as place branding (Kavaratzis and Hatch 2013). Clearer understanding of the key conceptual terms is necessary if empirical research is to progress. Without clear specification of the concepts, measurement, which is fundamental to empirical research, cannot take place. However, issues of definition will be aided by the increasing congruity between the concepts forming the mainstream and place branding constructs.

Thirdly, future empirical research will need to evaluate the relevance and potential transferability of mainstream branding concepts. This research could also, explore the transferability of embedded concepts such as the components of brand equity: brand knowledge, brand awareness and salience (Keller 1998), as well as perceived quality and brand loyalty (Aaker and Joachimstaler 2000). These concepts may not easily be transferred and issues of adaptation will continually need to be explored. While the analysis presented here shows that a wider discussion of concept transferability has now begun (see Karavatzis and Ashworth 2008; Dinnie 2008; Pike 2009; Hankinson 2010a), much of this work has so far been qualitative and of an exploratory nature. There is now a need for more confirmatory research based upon quantitative data in order to specify more clearly the role of the key concepts discussed above in the development of place brands.

To conclude: as the areas contributing to place branding continue to converge, academic attention must focus on the concepts that form and reflect the place branding construct, a potential list of which has been proposed in this chapter. This however, is inevitably incomplete and certainly not incontrovertible. At the same time, a distinction should be made between the concepts that reflect and form the place brand construct, and the moderating variables, which impact on the management and outcomes of place branding. Future research into these concepts must also examine the impact of the moderators in terms of their relevance and impact on the transferability of these concepts.

However, while the continuing convergence is to be encouraged, it is unlikely to result in complete congruity. Place branding will remain an interdisciplinary field of study attracting researchers from multiple perspectives. Some of these may be critical, although place branding is not unusual in this respect. For example, Klein (2000) published a strong critique of mainstream branding practice in her book “No logo”. Also, although the mainstream marketing literature is primarily written from a

normative perspective, contributors are also drawn from disciplines such as economics, social science and organisational behaviour, which have alternative perspectives. Therefore, multi-disciplinarity should be viewed as a strength rather than a weakness.

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