Regions

THE VOICE OF THE MEMBERSHIP

No 268   Winter 2007

CITY AND REGIONAL BRANDING

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- Building learning communities in city-regions to capture grass-roots learning processes
- Disseminating learning research to community and policy-maker groups
- Scale and the unclear nature of place branding

PILE 'EM HIGH, SELL 'EM CHEAP?

Guest Editor Gert-Jan Hospers questions the assumptions of the latest fad of 'place branding'

In recent years, the idea that territories can be branded like products in a shop has found widespread application. Cities and regions, even more than in the past, compete for the favours of inhabitants, firms and visitors. This battle has been particularly hard fought in Europe, partly caused by advancing European integration and the associated adoption of 'good and best practices'.

Every place that wishes to have a high profile has invested in knowledge institutes, creative industries, shopping centres and amenities that have to do with the quality of life. This copycat behaviour has led to a growing similarity between cities and regions: under such circumstances, it is the small details, such as the image of an area, which can be decisive in decisions taken by firms or individuals looking for a place to settle or visit. It is no surprise then that places want to attract the attention and try to build an image.

Policy makers use the idea of 'place branding' to try to turn the principle 'unknown, unloved' into the maxim 'known, loved'. Indeed, there are cities and regions across Europe where this deliberate policy strategy of image building has paid off. Classic examples are Glasgow (from '(S)miles Better' in the 1980s to 'Scotland with Style' since 2004), the Scandinavian Øresund ('The Human Capital') and the German Ruhr Area ('The Ruhrgebiet… is Hard to Beat'), while recent cases of alleged successful place branding are Amsterdam ('**I Am**sterdam'), the Danish city of Aalborg ('Seize the World') and the North-East of England ('Passionate People. Passionate Places').

Abstract brands are brought to life in places

From the perspective of marketing, these are strong campaigns. For one thing, the place brands reflect these particular places'

singular atmospheres, emphasize unique local assets or offer a double meaning drawing connections between two previously unappreciated features of a location. Moreover, the operational aspects of these branding campaigns have been praised, such as the use of original marketing channels (e.g. adverts on taxis and free logos for local firms), merchandising or smart forms of public-private partnership.

In a world where place branding is widely used, it is important not to underestimate its drawbacks. Most importantly, there is a big difference between marketing products and places: there is no need to ask the baked beans in a can how they want to be branded — but places are different because they are all made up of people, and those people may or may not agree with the brand. This agreement is as critical is determining whether it succeeds as whether the brand is plausible to outside interests.

Another criticism is the high costs involved in branding campaigns. The Dutch city of The Hague, for example, is spending €8m annually to brand the place as the 'International City of Peace, Justice and Security'. Obviously, this is a lot of money that could have been used

Box 1: The difference between 'marketing' and 'branding' places

In this issue of Regions the terms 'place (or city or regional) marketing' and 'branding' are used interchangeably – as is mostly the case nowadays. In theory, however, there is a subtle difference between the two concepts, which can be discovered when going back to the etymology of the words 'marketing' and 'branding'. Marketing comes from 'market getting' and has the market as its starting point, while branding literally means 'burning' or 'marking' something. Thus, place marketing starts from the image outsiders have of a place (outside-in-approach). In turn, place branding is an act by the place itself and tells the outside world what it is or how it wants to be seen (inside-out-approach). Though place branding might seem somewhat easier than marketing (there is no need to take into account people's perceptions of a city or a region), branding is still difficult, simply because representing a place is much more complex and contested than selling a product.

alternatively to improve the situation in, say, The Hague's deprived neighbourhoods. Is it really necessary for an area to spend such large amounts of money to attract the attention of outsiders?

In my view, there are other, more efficient methods to get similar results, for example, by a smart way of organizing free publicity around the locality. Journalists, in the print, broadcast and digital medias are always looking for good stories, so why are places not investing in informative press travels that invite them to come and report on the place? Such an alternative strategy of place branding by means of free publicity does not only save public money, its effects might be greater as well. After all, who would you believe earlier: a mayor repeating himself how great his city is, or a third party telling that the place is ordinary but still worth paying a visit? For me, the choice is not that hard to make…

Gert Jan Hospers is an editor of Regions newsletter and Guest Editor of this regional survey. The Regional Survey 'City and Regional Branding' appears from page 10.

REGIONAL SURVEY: CITY AND REGIONAL BRANDING

Guest editor: Gert–Jan Hospers

Introduction: City & Regional Branding

Cities and regions increasingly compete to attract and retain residents, entrepreneurs and visitors. The location choice of people is based more and more on such soft factors as an area's image. Therefore most territories apply a strategy of 'place branding' now. Place branding campaigns like 'I Amsterdam', 'Øresund - The Human Capital' and 'The North-East - Passionate People, Passionate Places' are telling cases in point. Does it make sense to invest in 'place branding'? What are the tricks and traps? What is the relationship of branding with the identity of a city or a region?

These and other questions are the topic of the Regional Survey at hand. The eight papers have been written by enthusiastic senior and junior researchers working in the field of economics, geography, architecture, cultural studies, marketing and policy studies. The wide range of disciplines involved shows how multidisciplinary the topic of place branding is.

To set the scene, we start with a beautifully written paper by Rhys David who demonstrates how important it is that places become a brand – and how sad it is that Wales isn't one yet. The intricate links of branding with place identity and image are studied in the two following interesting contributions: Detlev Ipsen and Susanne Kost explore the meaning of place identity for regional development, while Martijn Smit investigates the image among Italian students of their nation's countryside.

Roberta Comunian, a regular contributor to Regions, stays with us in Italy and describes the branding of Torino and the role of cultural manifestations in attracting the attention of visitors. In the next paper Laura Cambell presents her M. Sc. thesis work and uses the case of Shelburne, Ontario, to argue that local culture can be both a means and an end of place branding. Based on evidence from their INTERREG III-project, Derek Jan Fikkers and Frans Coenen are less optimistic about the value of place branding, especially when it comes to countering regional brain drain.

The Survey continues on with a paper by Seppo Rainisto, one of Europe's place branding specialists, on success factors of place branding and ends with a critical piece by Paweł Capik. All in all, the papers make clear that research on place branding is fascinating, but still in an early stage, or as the last author rightly notes: 'the popularity and attractivenss of the notion [of place branding] comes not only from its fashionable nomenclature, but also from the vast research opportunities it presents'.

'WALES: THE BRAND'?

Rhys David, Institute of Welsh Affairs

INTRODUCTION

For those who care about 'Brand Wales' – and that includes most of the country's 3m inhabitants – an obsessive fear is whether people outside the UK think Wales is just part of England. It is almost as if Pepsi Cola was thought of as Coca Cola's energy drink, rather than its biggest rival, or that Ford was seen as another General Motors brand, like Chevrolet or Opel.

The Millennium stadium has a strong brand

If there was an excuse for such confusion, it should over recent years have become less plausible. Wales has acquired new political institutions of its own and its first ever 'Government' in the last 15 years, not to mention several easily recognisable and frequently photographed new physical icons, notably the Wales Millennium Centre (for the performing arts), the Millennium Stadium (for big sporting and show business events) and the National Botanic Garden.

A more distinctive Wales has begun to emerge since the devolution process began with a narrow 'yes' vote 1997, coupled with more distinctively pro-Welsh feelings. Research from the Economic and Social Science Research Council last year revealed that some 21% of a sample saw themselves as just Welsh, up from 17% in 1997. Around 27% see themselves as more Welsh than British, 29% feel equally Welsh and British and 17% feel either more British than Welsh or completely British. Significantly, it was among the youngest people that the largest mainly Welsh answers were found.

The Assembly is not universally popular but support for it has grown consistently since it came into being in 1999. More than twice as many – 43% – now favour full law-making powers as want to see the Assembly abolished, with around 12% wishing to see full independence from the rest of the UK and the remainder happy with the current limited primary legislative powers.

Policies have begun to diverge from those in the rest of the UK. In education, the previous Labour administration has moved away from the target-driven approach in England and in health it has placed greater emphasis on health promotion. In a further demonstration of its wish to separate itself from well-established English policies, the Labour/Plaid Cymru coalition that took power after the May 2007 elections has agreed not to use private capital in National Health Service hospitals and to end the use of private hospitals by the NHS. Business – at least in the shape of the voluntary and representational sector – has re-organised itself, too, to reflect new Welsh territorial realities, and there have been some small additions to consular representation in Wales.

The absence of a strong commercial brand

Yet, although there are signs of a strengthening national identity, there is something missing that stunts this ongoing effort – the weak Welsh presence in modern commercial fields, and particularly those

closest to the consumer. Too much of Wales's image is based on (usually-subsidised) artistic, cultural and heritage icons and/or its industrial and sporting past. In a world where the brand countries create for themselves is all-important, Wales has a brand that seems to say – come and visit us and look at what we used to do, or come and see what a show we put on. We have too little to show that we are and can continue to be competitors in a modern commercial world.

If you ask people to name a product that instantly says Welsh and recognisable, they might think of Welsh National Opera and rugby – both of them businesses of a sort but not in the conventional sense (see box 1). When it comes to outstanding Welsh businesses or commercial products they would be stumped. If you ask the same of Scotland, most people can name a handful of Scotch whiskies, and a range of other Scottish food products.

Scotland also has strong service sector companies that are known well beyond its borders. Two of Britain's big four banks are effectively Anglo-Scottish companies – Royal Bank of Scotland, now the owners of National Westminster Bank, and Halifax Bank of Scotland (HBOS) and they are present on every important High Street in Britain as well as in many centres overseas. Wales's indigenous financial institutions are by comparison small.

Why has Wales failed to develop a strong indigenous business sector, comparable in its size and significance with those of its somewhat larger but still relatively small Celtic neighbours, and in an age where globalisation is carrying all before it, does it matter? Wales's industrial strength was built on minerals either directly exported, such as coal, or semi-processed into steel for incorporation into products elsewhere in the wider UK and world manufacturing economies.

These two major sectors were both nationalised in the immediate post-war period, removing control from Wales and stifling the growth of an entrepreneurial class that might have explored other downstream opportunities to develop Welsh products. When these industries went into serious decline, Government policy targeted overseas investors, offering the lure of low unit labour costs. As a result, Wales's manufacturing effort is very largely externally owned and the Welsh economy continues to have strong bias towards intermediate products that are incorporated into other downstream goods.

The Welsh Assembly Government argues that unemployment in Wales is low and the rate of job creation over recent years has been strong, even if much of it
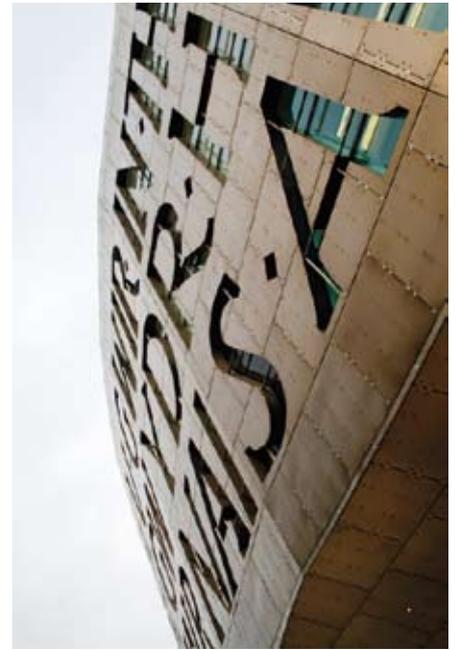
Trend through tradition in Wales

has been in the public sector. Indeed, there are now more people in work in Wales than ever before. Wales still manages to have a reasonably large – by UK standards – manufacturing sector contributing to a range of products put together and sold around the world by big industrial groups based elsewhere. Ford makes several million engines every year in Bridgend and Airbus could not fly without its Welsh wings made in Flintshire.

Box 1: Lessons from Celtic neighbours

Wales needs many more similar companies, however, and needs them to grow into sizeable businesses. Valuable as it is to have big multinational companies in Wales making largely intermediate products, they only project an image of Wales or of Welsh quality at the margins. While each of these businesses creates significant employment in Wales, none of them has any aspect of Welshness at the core of its message and is, therefore, able to deliver branding benefits to Wales. And, as the nation has found increasingly over recent years, their lack of local roots makes these businesses much more likely to leave to take advantage of lower labour costs or other incentives in other parts of the world.

The absence of strong Welsh-based brands also makes it much more difficult to adapt and survive in a world where globalisation is leading to the concentration of production in the lowest-cost centres. China and India, given the virtually unlimited pools of labour to which they will have access for generations to come, are going to dominate world manufacturing for the foreseeable future. Yet, while advanced economies may not be able to compete as manufacturers with low cost producers, any economy with ambition does need to be involved in organising the design, manufacture, distribution and sale of products, if it is to share in the benefits of globalisation and not always be its victim.

Strong companies and strong brands also play another very important role in modern society as patrons. Scotland's and Ireland's big companies support and enhance the image of their respective countries and their own businesses through support for charities, sports teams or the arts. In Wales there are only a very small number of organisations that can be called on to fulfil this role.

At its most basic level, therefore, brands have become a key component in economic success. Being the country that owns top quality products such as Guinness, Scotch Whisky, the Maersk shipping line (Denmark), Hamleys and House of Fraser (Iceland) or Nokia (Finland) also helps to feed the self-esteem of the inhabitants of these small countries, even if only subconsciously, leaving them with the underlying feeling that they belong to a nation which has something important to offer the world. This native commercial success – and the iconography associated with it conveys an image of a country where businesses and individuals succeed and this in itself can be helpful in persuading other businesses to invest there.

Wales's lack of these potent modern commercial symbols can make it dangerously easy for people in Wales to live in the past, reflecting constantly on former glories, or dependent on a narrow range of talented individuals as a source of pride. Wales must make the transition from externally owned business and small scale brands into creating an economy that more closely resembles its Celtic neighbours, where strong locally-owned companies help to project positive images to the world. Policy has not sufficiently identified this weakness to date, however, and there must be doubt whether the current armoury of policies will bring about the changes needed.

There are also, of course, Welsh head-quartered businesses. Cardiff has seen a growth in its financial services sector over recent years, and amid the various UK owned companies providing largely back-office or call centre services from the city, there is one substantial Welsh-based group, Admiral Insurance, which was started in the Welsh capital some ten years ago and has become highly successful, expanding its operations into the Continent as well.

Wales has also developed some useful brands over recent years but these tend to be concentrated in the food sector, highly niche and known only to those who make a special point of finding out about things Welsh. Extensive promotion of Welsh lamb and beef has also been successful in bringing Welsh meats to the attention of chefs and other buyers in France and Italy. As in other countries, the universities are also the source of many new businesses, particularly Cardiff.

The need for a clever industrial policy

Many of the policies that have emerged over recent years from the Assembly, such as *Wales a Vibrant Economy,* have focused heavily – and in a way quite rightly – on improving skills and encouraging people to enter into business on their own account. These strategies are crucially important but even if they work they will only do so over the very long term and may merely add to the already very large number of micro businesses in Wales.

There appears little evidence, however, of any recognition of the need to develop a Welsh presence in certain key areas of the modern consumer economy – and not necessarily those requiring large amounts of capital investment. We need a cleverer industrial policy in Wales and it might be appropriate, for the Welsh Assembly Government to identify instead sectors where Wales is weak and where Welsh companies could be encouraged to develop. Basic sectors, such as food and drink, transport and distribution, retailing (High Street and Internet), hospitality, property and construction, public transport, telecoms and energy supply, are key building blocks within economies. Within Wales there are a number of medium-sized companies in these sectors whose growth needs to be supported and their expansion in Wales and beyond facilitated.

There are also sectors where Wales is under-represented, such as the provision of financial services, fund management services, private client wealth services, and the media. Welsh companies should be encouraged to co-operate or amalgamate to create stronger groups that can expand outside Wales rather than succumb as often happens to the aggregating ambitions of other UK or overseas companies. Welsh companies need also to participate in new economic areas, such as new forms of energy, in providing the goods and services needed to cater for Europe's ageing populations and the many tourists from all over the world who visit the country each year.

Basic manufacturing is likely to become increasingly unviable in Europe but opportunities exist to organize the design, manufacture and distribution of such products from the new industrial economies. Government support in Wales needs to address how Welsh companies can become more closely involved in these operations, establishing Welsh companies as end-suppliers of consumer goods. Just as importantly, there needs to be much closer study of how other similarly-sized economies have projected themselves and nurtured their core businesses.

THE IDENTITY OF PLACE AND ITS MEANING FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Detlev Ipsen & Susanne Kost, University of Kassel, Germany

Introduction

In the last decades it has been the so-called 'hard factors' which have been regarded as particularly important for regional economic development. These questions are concerned with the status of infrastructure, schools, hospitals and cultural facilities. How easy is it to reach an area, how close

The Guadiana Bridge linking Portugal and Spain, co-funded by Interreg

is the nearest motorway connection, how well can the area be supplied or should central places be planned? Are the water supply and waste disposal organised according to state-of-the-art technology? Is the power supply reliable?

It would certainly be an exaggeration to claim that these locational factors no longer play a role in the development of regions. However, the infrastructural provisions for regions within large parts of the European Union have become so similar that the image of a region and people's relationship to it are becoming increasingly important development factors. This article discusses the influence of the identity of a region and how people identify with a region according to socio-economic development.

Physical infrastructure no longer distinguishes between place

We firstly introduce the theoretical concept of identity as a theme for discussion.

What does identity really mean, how does identification with a region emerge and what effect does this have on spatial development? Secondly, we briefly clarify identity policy with two very different examples. The first is the role of a particular place – the Emscher park in the Ruhr – in the way that region as a whole regards itself. The second example is a house-building cooperative with a specific policy to encourage the tenants to identify with the area in which they live.

Identity

What is identity? Identity is the result of a communicative process. The inhabitants of an area talk about an area's characteristics, its advantages and its disadvantages. A collective cognitive picture arises through this process, an agreement as to what makes up a region, a landscape or a residential area. This forms a basis from which the image of a region emerges, and an emotional relationship towards a region develops

in the inhabitants. Rational perceptions combine with emotional ties within this identity. One knows a region and feels connected to it, sees oneself as a part of this region and is moulded by it. Resulting from this feeling of identity comes the decision to stay within a region, to work there or to invest there.

How does a positive regional identity develop? Two factors are especially important. On the one hand the area must offer opportunities which permit a variety of activities. Thinking of a region conjures up pictures of workplaces and leisure activities, thinking of an apartment conjures up ideas on the form of the rooms, working peacefully and enjoying an evening meal with a friend or partner. It is not just the room's opportunity structure but also its aesthetics which encourage that feeling of identity.
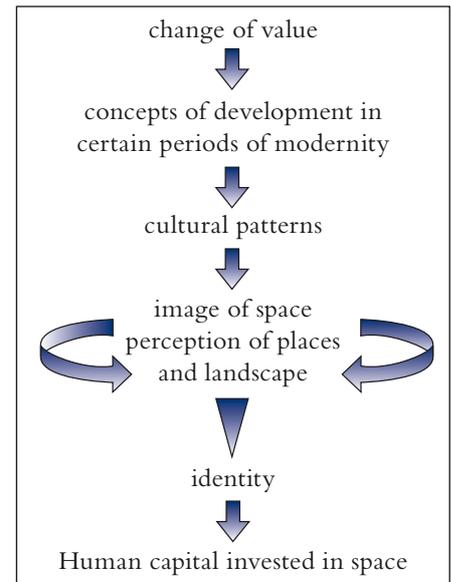
This is naturally not a question of generally valid standards but is much more concerned with the coherence of needs and attitudes of a certain time, a certain culture and of certain social groups. A particular area is thus only coherent in a relative sense and so contributes to the forming of identity. We know that in the nineteenth century people looked on the mountains and the sea as inhospitable and dangerous and that only gradually have they become the most popular holiday destinations. In Germany a single-family house is seen as the ideal way to live, in Spain it is a block of flats.

In order to understand what identity really means, one must examine a person's biography, the values of a social group and the culture of a country in a specific period. It is thus plausible to establish that identity is not so much a state as a process. Identities develop and deteriorate, causing an increase and a decrease in the value of a region, individually and collectively. In this way the flows of people and capital determine the potential of spatial development (see figure 1).

In the 1960s lots of houses in towns in West Germany were demolished. They had been built in the late nineteenth century and were no longer seen as modern. Ten years later the academic middle class revalued these houses; they fulfilled the

Figure 1: Identity and spatial development

change of value

↓

concepts of development in certain periods of modernity

↓

cultural patterns

↓

image of space perception of places and landscape

↓

identity

↓

Human capital invested in space

picture of an urban life and extensive redevelopment programmes were launched.

What effect does identity have on the development of regions? One aspect has already been stated, namely that the process of identity plays its part in the

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Box 2: The Kassel 'Hand-in-hand' Housing Co-operative

The tasks of cooperatives involved in providing housing in Germany changed radically since they were founded at the end of the 19th century. One such co-operative was formed in the German town of Kassel, but that co-operative has had to reinvent itself in recent years. Driven by two prongs of demographic change, out-migration of the young alongside general ageing, we can observe that in many towns there is a situation in which apartments are more likely to be standing empty.

The basic supply of living space is secure. It is no longer a matter of merely supplying dwellings at a favourable rate in order to keep tenants and to be able to attract more, the conceptual approach of these businesses must basically change. Nowadays the quality of the living space and its surroundings plays a much greater role, as an increasingly individualised society seeks new spaces in which to play out alternatives to the traditional family way of life.

The Kassel house-building cooperative 1889 broke away from its traditional role of solely providing blocks of flats and has adapted itself to the social and cultural biographies and needs of its tenants. The manager of the house-building cooperative argued:

"When a house-building cooperative in this day and age understands that it can offer more than only a favourable living space, then it can work to create identity in either a district of a town or the town itself."

First of all, it must find a modern transformation for its traditions. This is comparable with the search for a transformation of the industry tradition of a town or region in the present day, as was carried out in the Ruhr Area with the International Building Exhibition Emscherpark.

Secondly, this modernisation also involved developing new concepts and offers, which react to and are orientated towards changed life situations and the ways of life of the people. In order to realise this transfer, the enterprise was fundamentally modernised and today it offers a tenant-friendly service and comparably favourable rents.

A new definition of a cooperative society was the foundation of its own association, the "Hand-in-Hand", which maintains small citizens' meetings in four town districts. According to the manager, "open communication is absolutely necessary for such a developmental process".

The house-building cooperative puts rooms and staff at the association's disposal. It wishes to offer all the inhabitants of the town districts space to allow for their own activities, but also to provide professional advice in certain situations. In this way it has created a structural platform, on which interested and committed people can meet, but also those with questions and problems.

The co-operative wants to strengthen the initiative of the people themselves, within the district; to bring tenants of the housing cooperative and other inhabitants of the district together, and to link up the existing offers with each other, "pursuing an approach to make people active, not a sheltering approach."

This is naturally linked in certain ways to the traditions of house-building cooperatives but it is less concerned with the communal solidarity within itself as with the involvement of this community directed outwardly into the living and work surroundings. In five years the association has enlisted 640 members, almost the half of which are tenants of the cooperative. In the meantime more than 1500 events per year are organised and provided in the Hand-in-Hand association by the inhabitants of the district. The intensive communicative processes which thus occur are a result of identity and strengthen it at the same time.

devaluation and revaluation of regions. On the other hand, planners and architects are discovering that the layout of regions leads to the emergence of new identities. The International Building Exhibition Emscherpark reinterpreted 'steelworks into sculptures' and 'slag heaps into observation mountains', thereby decisively changing the image of the Ruhr Area. It was not possible to avert the crisis of the steel and coal industry but the identity of the entire region did not fall into decline.

The processes of identity are thus connected not only actively with the development of a region – they also play a part in regional development – but also passively: they are formed by the development. In this respect, planners, architects, designers, artists and building engineers are also producers of social and cultural identities. They are certainly involved in the images of what is useful and what is attractive. One should, however, consider that how society changes is more like a sluggish river in its lower reaches than like a raging mountain stream.

Empirical examples

The previous argument demonstrates a connection between identity and spatial development. Should one wish to know in which direction this development is moving, it is necessary to view the processes of identity in correlation to certain specific temporal and spatial phases of modernisation. In the 1960s it was possible, in Germany and some other European countries, to carry through an idea of an environment which was based on the economic rationality of agriculture. The application of geometric methods in the landscape was assessed as beautiful in planning and in policy.

Values changed in the 1980s, because of the criticism of Fordism – ecology and variety became models in landscape aesthetics. Finally, very briefly, we would like to go into the constellations of the forming of identity. We suggest, when doing this, to differentiate between places and processes. Places in the European history where identity has been formed have a long history. The Christian Church possessed holy mountains to establish a continuity of pre-Christian and Christian identity.

In the Age of Romanticism, castles became anchors of a romantic awareness of life. Observation towers produced the "Panoramic View", with which identity due to the increase of movement by railways and cars could be associated. Locally, places always play a large role and are often associated with historical events and stories. The Dörnberg, a mountain near Kassel, is shaped like an old volcano and is connected to a former Celtic refuge.

Conclusion

The empirical examples show that spatial formations of identity are complex and long-term processes. They are the result of historical and current events and formations, or a consciously-calculated policy. In this respect they differ from spatial branding, with which the image of a region, relevant to the current situation, should be changed quickly. Identity helps to form an image of a place, but mainly it is an expression of the integration of personal life and spatial environment. In this way identity creates activities which contribute to the socio-economic development of a region.

REGIONAL BRANDING IN ITALY: ITALIANS' RURAL IMAGINARIES

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Introduction

Policymakers may be selecting a brand for their region, but what are the actual perceptions that people have of those regions? In other words: do we know what people associate with specific regions? Or even with a more general concept like 'the countryside'? Fortunately, there are some results from a survey the present author performed in 2003, which will be briefly presented here. It looks at perceptions of the Italian countryside in general, and on the perceptions of two rural regions in particular.

'Campanilismo'

Italy is a complex country, with a multi-layered history, where Romans, the Catholic Church and a strong regional conscience all mix together. Italians may be proud of their country, they are often even more proud of their home region and their native village (the so-called *campanilismo*). Even if their parents migrated to a city, they still identify with that same 'home village'. Now, of course Italians know the strengths of their own

Table 1: 'Mention three regions of the Italian countryside which you find most attractive'		
Region	No. responses	Percentage
Toscana	132	81%
Umbria	76	47%
Lazio	53	33%
Abruzzo	27	17%
Marche	26	16%
Campania	25	15%
Puglia	23	14%
Sicilia	16	10%
Sardegna	14	9%
Emilia Romagna	13	8%
Basilicata	8	5%
Calabria	8	5%
Lombardia	7	4%
Trentino–Alto Adige	7	4%
Veneto	6	4%
Liguria	5	3%
Po plain	4	2%
Molise	2	1%
Piemonte	2	1%
Friuli–Venezia Giulia	1	1%
Valle d'Aosta	1	1%
total filled in (×3)	163	100%
not responding	46	–

country: all Italians will acknowledge the superior role of Tuscany.

Or rather, most of them will, for Manzi (2001) gives an example of stracampanilismo, where someone goes even so far as to state: "La regione X e' bella e interessante come la Toscana, se non di piu'. Peccato che le manchi Firenze!" ("Region X is just as beautiful and interesting as Tuscany, if not more. Pity that it has no Florence!")

But that is an extreme case; the position of Tuscany is not really contested, at least not for its countryside. As for cities, Rome, Venice and Milan would not surrender to Florence easily! A survey among some 200 students at the Università di Roma Tre in 2003 gave the following results for the question 'Mention three regions of the Italian countryside which you find most attractive' (see table 1).

This survey set out to discover what types of associations Italians (in this case Italian students at a faculty of Humanities) had when confronted either with the general word 'countryside' or with a specific region: the countryside of Umbria, the Green Heart of Italy, an hours drive north of Rome, or that of the Agro Pontino, a rather bland polder from the Mussolini era, just southeast of Rome

The Agro Pontino has suffered from its image as a flat, uninteresting, industrialized agricultural region. The regional tourist office has chosen not to combat that image, but rather to add another: their posters focus on the inland mountain ranges, showing l'Altra faccia della Provincia Pontina (the other face of the Pontine province).

Table 2: 'Mention four random words you associate with 'the countryside'				
association	translation	#	%	cum. %
verde	green	69	9,2%	9,2%
tranquillita'	quietness	25	3,3%	12,5%
alberi	trees	24	3,2%	15,7%
natura	nature	21	2,8%	18,5%
animali	animals	19	2,5%	21,0%
fiori	flowers	15	2,0%	23,0%
sole	sun	14	1,9%	24,9%
prato	meadow	13	1,7%	26,6%
erba	grass	12	1,6%	28,2%
colline	hills	11	1,5%	29,7%
pace	peace	11	1,5%	31,2%
aria	air	10	1,3%	32,5%
aria pulita	clean air	10	1,3%	33,8%
other	–	497	66,2%	100%
Total	–	751	100,0%	
total for peace, relaxing, calm etc.		*54*	*7,2%*	
total for animals, sheep, insects etc.		*39*	*5,2%*	

Umbria: Green Heart of Italy?
Umbria uses the well-known slogan 'The Green Heart of Italy', which on the one hand refers to its geographical position, central within Italy, but on the other hand (unintentionally?) obliquely refers to the concept of green lungs; hearts and lungs keep the country going. Umbria's centrality is one of its strengths: it makes the region acceptable to both North and South in a country where many inhabitants of the north find even the city of Rome to be too far south to be accepted as their capital.

The green image of Umbria is of course highly visual. The colour green is also mentioned most, when respondents are asked to come up with four random words they associate with 'the countryside' ('of Italy', 'of Umbria' or 'of the Agro Pontino') (Figure 2). Its first position is followed by a series of words referring to calm, quietness and (inner) peace, which even lumped together do not overtake 'green'.

One of the strengths of recent research into perceptions and discourse is its capacity to distinguish between visual, functional and socio-cultural values. One aspect that is rarely mentioned, but ever more frequently capitalized upon, is food. Italy's regions have long discovered their regional products (after all, Slow Food is originally an Italian movement), but they have promoted regional food fairs and created taste trails.

URBAN BRANDING AND CONTEMPORARY ART
'TORINO CONTEMPORANEA' AS A MODEL OF CULTURAL MARKETING

Roberta Comunian, University of Leeds, UK

Introduction

In the last decade, the city of Turin has been one of the most farsighted municipalities in Italy, developing a post-industrial strategy for urban growth. Turin is the capital city of Piemonte, and as a heavily industrialized region, it has been struggling to come to terms with the competitive pressures of the modern global economy. The region is synonymous with design in manufacturing as well as in its own right. Although industrial conversion towards the knowledge economy has been successful, the city has had difficulties updating its brand to reflect the reality of the knowledge-driven city.

In 2000, Turin was the first Italian city to adopt a Strategic Plan, revisited in 2006 and updated to the changing socio-economic conditions. The urban branding strategy is just one aspect of a wider approach that the city has taken towards urban planning and public consultation. These activities are undertaken mainly through the 'Torino Internazionale', the local development agency, which has a broader remit and perspective on the overall development of the city.

Furthermore, these activities have allowed a positive projection of the city activities to national and international audiences and a more powerful commitment to attracting new visitors to the city. Turin's most recent urban strategic plan highlights the importance of Turin becoming a knowledge city and society.

"The keystone for completing this transformation is the investment in human resources and innovation, and valourisation of the patrimony of local competences in order to adapt them to the new global context" (www.torinointernazionale.org).

In order to respond to national and international competition, in the last four years the city has developed a suite of

promotional campaigns, based around the growing number of activities and events that have been taking place in the city. Central to this development was the preparation for the hosting of the Winter Olympics Games in 2006 and the possibility offered to the wider city-region of hosting such a prestigious international event.

However, to the authorities it was clear from the beginning that the momentum developed through this event must not be allowed to fade away in the post-Olympics phase. A new campaign has been launched in 2007 *Torino è sempre più bella* (see Box 3) whilst another world event, the World Design Capital, will focus the spotlight once more on the city in 2008.

Contemporary art as cultural capital

The focus of this brief article is on a very specific urban branding and cultural framework adopted by the city in relation to contemporary art. Turin is on the world map for contemporary art because between 1965 and 1967 it was the heart of the development of the *Arte Povera* ('Poor art', i.e. cheap art producible by anyone) movement. This historic link has been taken up in the last decades by the collective will of public policy, private actors and cultural intermediaries to create a system around contemporary art.

In 1984, Turin opened the first contemporary art museum of all Italy. Though at that time not much attention was paid to contemporary art at the national level, Turin underlined its pioneer role and invested in the refurbishment of *Castello di Rivoli* and its collection. This became a perfect repository demonstrating city commitment and allowing celebration of Arte Povera and the following *neo-expressionist Transavanguardia* movement.

From the 1990s the city engaged with emerging strengths in contemporary art. The city, both its private actors and public forces, committed themselves to the importance of contemporary art, not simply as a cultural asset, but also as an economic sector and the conveyor of a new image of the city linked to the knowledge economy, creativity and cutting-edge events and activities. This rapidly became a winning strategy in the national Italian platform at the time much more centred around promoting the 'historic' art cities (see preceding article).

Ten years later, in 1994, *Artissima* took place place in the city. It began as a fair of modern and contemporary art. In 1999, *Artissima* was refocused specifically on contemporary art, positioning itself as an international event. In 2000, the fair became 'Artissima. Contemporary Art in Turin'. An interesting aspect of the Artissima Fair was the fact that since 2004, the management and brand of the fair was undertaken by the Foundation *Torino Musei,* the city coordinating body for public cultural institutions such as GAM (the city civic gallery) and the other civic museums. The scientific committee was led by the directors of GAM and *Castello di Rivoli* and by a curator named by them.

Starting from 1998/1999 another important event, later to become part of the contemporary identity of the city, invaded Turin. *Luci d'Artista* (Artist's Lights) was, and still is, designed as public art event but with a strong component of image promotion, particularly in the way the pieces of public art were scattered around the city monuments, squares and roads. Between the beginning of November and the end of January each year, the street and urban spaces of Turin are illuminated by a collection of specially commissioned lights artworks by contemporary artists.

By the end of the nineties another milestone project the '11 Artists for the Railway Cutting' came to fruition. The city's largest public art project was developed within the plans for the urban development of city. The new master plan for Turin aimed at lowering the level of the trains tracks criss-crossing the city, by constructing new stations and placing a platform above the railway cutting. Within this project, eleven public artworks were commissioned. Three works, namely Mario Merz's Igloo Fountain, Giuseppe Penone's Garden Tree and Per Kirkeby's Work for Turin were completed by November 2002.

Contemporary art as a cultural brand

Until 2000 the number of activities around the sector was extensive but not cohesive. It was only in 2001 that the city council launched *Novembre Arte Contemporanea* (now 'Contemporary Arts Turin') as a tool to combine the communication and promotion of the image of Turin as tourist destination. It aimed to coordinate the event of *Artissima*

Box 3: Developing a growing attention to the city

Torino è sempre + bella (translated 'Turin beauty + passion' but literately 'Turin is more and more beautiful') is the latest marketing campaign of the city. The picture belongs to the set of four images, one for each season, designed by the artists and illustrator Lorenzo Mattotti. The image of Turin and its promotion has evolved in the last four year, changing the perception of visitors and presenting new aspects of a changing city. In 2001, it was the time of *Torino da scoprire* (Turin to discover) inviting people to take a look also to parts and corners of the city usually hidden and less known, this at a time when there was not even a specific budget for marketing campaigns of the city. In 2003 the slogan developed was 'a city that surprises you' also used with the slogan 'Torino always on the move' (*Torino non sta mai ferma*). Now the campaign 'Torino è sempre + bella' reminds people that even after the Winter Olympics, Turin remains an interesting place to visit. The growth in the budget and promotional commitment of the city (a budget of €3m in 2006, from a €2.5m in 2005) corresponds to an increase in the number of visitors from 3.3m in 2005 (from the 1.7m in 2001) with the goal of reaching 8m visitors in 2011.

Logo and branding of the campaign 'Torino è sempre + bella'

The logo of Luci d'Artista

with a general promotion of contemporary art in the city through Luci d'Artista and a series of other events such as ManifesTO and the coordination of the evening opening of the private galleries on the Saturday night of the art fair (Saturday Night Fever).

Introducing the idea of the collective opening also permitted galleries to create a critical mass and a big event out of small openings, making it easier for people and collector to access many events in one occasion. The activities were also developed thanks to the collaboration of TAG (Turin Art Galleries), an association established in 2001 to facilitate the cooperation with public bodies and to work out coordinated initiatives for the promotion of contemporary art.

One of the outcomes of this project was *ManifesTO*, which has been on for the past 8 years. The project consists of big posters representing artworks by artists, selected by the galleries of Turin, which are then installed in the busiest streets of the city. In the years the city has been able to support the growth of both institutional and private initiatives.

There are now four major institutions devoted to contemporary art, which benefit from the support of the city but also of the private foundations of the city: *Castello di Rivoli* (Rivoli Castle), *GAM Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea* (the Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art), Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo per l'Arte (the Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Foundation for Art) and the more recent *Fondazione Merz* (Merz Foundation).

As can be inferred, the central dimension of the growing promotional role of contemporary art as both a valuable economic activity and as image-forming for a culturally vibrant city is given by the public-private coordination of activities. In 2007, Contemporary Arts Torino Piemonte', the umbrella programme covering and coordinating all these activities was launched, proposing a rich autumn calendar in the visual arts, music, theatre, dance, cinema and the performing arts.

A new 'Contemporary' logo is designed to reinforce the identity of the events linked to contemporary art.

'Today, contemporary Turin is a label that represents a number of structures, initiatives and events that were born and have grown and developed in the city, unanimously considered the capital of contemporary art by critics and artists alike' (www.turismotorino.org).

The example of Turin clearly suggests how the image of a city needs to be anchored to its assets. The development of an image coherent with the nature and vitality of the activities taking place is appreciated and valued by visitors and locals. These outcomes are possible only when the city image is built involving all the different actors and activities the city can offer. In particular, the winning element for Turin has been the ability to coordinate public cultural and promotional goals, while meeting the economic support of local foundations and the commitment of the private commercial galleries in the city, their will to build on the public investments and develop the collaboration between each other and other actors. As Turismo Torino (www.turismotorino.org) put it:

'There are countless works of public art – sculptures, fountains, lights – which bear witness to changes in city planning and the modernisation of specific neighbourhoods and areas of Turin'.

COMMUNITY CULTURE, LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL BRANDING IN ONTARIO, CANADA

Laura Campbell, University of Guelph, Canada

Introduction

This article reports a critical examination of the interrelationships between community culture and local economic development in a mid-size rural community, revealing a community branding project as code for sentiment and meaning. That relationship may be fundamental, autonomous or corresponding over time. Culture acts as a filter of the economic development process and the opposite is also true.

Research on these links in a region at the north-western edge of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in Ontario, Shelburne, reveals a transition linked to a changing relationship rooted in attachment. The mid-size rural community has become a place and space where community culture and the local economic development process overlap, and where balance between old and new, social and market rationality, local and global emerge. Community marketing and branding activities as part of a community

revitalization project provide examples of a closer relationship between community culture and local economic development.

Shelburne: beyond 'Fiddleville'

Shelburne is the fastest growing small town in Ontario and set amidst a backdrop of rolling farmland punctuated by forests of beech, oak and maple; the rooftop of southern Ontario, the second highest point (and reason why wind farms now dot the horizon). Best known as Fiddleville, home to the Canadian Old Time Fiddle Championship, the five-day mid-August tradition draws musicians and tourists from all over the country.

Shelburne is also in the middle of a region of 'edge communities' tied to the Japanese auto-industry and Toronto. With automotive branch plants springing up all over the place, there is concern that, 'We

don't want Shelburne to become a parking lot'. Branding converges with a market orientation and an economic identity seen as spreading with the sprawl threatening a past, present and future increasingly espoused as and rooted in social rationality.

Shelburne has sought to define itself against the perceived sameness of the Greater Toronto Area, branding itself against all that Toronto stands for (international chains, global capitalism): a people place, a change of pace, quality of life and sing/dance/play. It is in these sentiments expressed in the community marketing and branding project that community culture is most visible.

Branding also implies 'making something cool' so that people care and want to attach themselves to it. If Shelburne makes itself 'cool' then people will 'buy-in' and identify with this place, curbing economic and emphasizing community cultural identity. There is a feeling that this process

could go one of two ways, encouraging either unity or fragmentation, either a narrow local economic development process or a more open cultural approach to designing and managing the community economy.

Branding and marketing is also 'related to getting your name out there, that you would want investment that would fit well into your community'. This speaks to a change in the community conversation, language development, and 'welcome mat' approach to economic development in which the Town is willing to make every effort to make it easy to locate in the region, undervaluing the community's resources in favour of the values and demands of the investor.

The location of Shelburne in Southern Ontario

Branding involves the attempt to suggest that it is desirable to locate 'here', wherever that 'here' is, because of particular features of the community itself. While marketing and promotion materials still assume the values of the mainstream market economy, the fact that a branding process is being undertaken suggests that there is a need to find a balance between 'path' and soul or spirit of place.

The branding project in Shelburne suggests that the town is getting to know itself and even a moment in which Shelburne has moved beyond looking at itself from the outside in and letting the 'outside' define it. Heated debates that characterized the lengthy public meetings associated with the project suggest that the Town is 'thinking before it speaks', perhaps reflecting an emerging mindfulness in local economic development and evolution of identity.

Improvements to health care, recreation and educational opportunities are part of the 'package'. It is considered important to mention that Shelburne is the smallest community in Ontario to have a family health-care team and other community development accomplishments. In line with Maslow's hierarchy

of needs, there is a sense that nourishment leads to accomplishment. There is an intermingling of social rational versus market-led approaches to marketing and branding. The message is increasingly that investment in the area should be in line with this place.

A 'people place'; is an apt description of the community: 'people wave to each other' and 'you can't walk down the street and not end up talking to someone you know'. 'A Change of Pace' touches on the fact that many people define the town, place and self against cities of the Greater Toronto Area, 'we don't want it to be like Toronto' and 'we moved here to get away from the city'.

Culture as means and ends in place branding

The slogan, 'A People Place, A Change of Pace', spread across flags and banners, further defines Shelburne against neighbouring towns. In nearby Flesherton, signs along the road say: 'hiking/skiing/country living/coffee'. While these signs also speak to a certain kind of lifestyle, Shelburne's stand out for being community focused, while those of the other town's stand out for being more tourist-centered. Shelburne's branding process attempts to make the invisible visible, relevant and grounded. Shelburne is a place to live, not just country living for 'weekenders'.

Signs emphasize a process not just a product, a functioning community and culture of interaction and flow and not only consumption, commodification and manipulation. While marketing materials are very much geared to external investment and recruitment, they are revamped to include broader conceptualizations of cultural interactions with a more diversified community economy. For example, Shelburne is 'where lifestyle leads to better business'.

There are signs of cultural depth in the economic development process. For example, in one workshop a stakeholder asks: 'Can we not focus on heritage and the new areas of economic development with the same marketing?' Shelburne is an example of place branding in which

culture is both the means and ends. Branding is about more than just 'getting your name out there'. It is about attracting economic activity that fit with the community. As such community culture is a filter in local economic development. It is about doing it for yourself.

The previous entrance signage emphasized Shelburne's nickname as 'Fiddleville' rather than the name proper. But, 'now, we want to be known for more', and the current sign has a small Fiddle logo with greater weight on Shelburne. Viewed as a victory for some and as a loss for others, the sign highlights a number of tensions in the branding debate more generally, social vs. market or modern vs. traditional. The fiddle is symbolic of the way the park in the following image came about; the 'angel' donation of one local resident who cared. Fiddle images ground the 'idea' of Shelburne in the welcome attributes of mutual support and emotional attachment (but also in the less welcome characteristics of nepotism and acquiescence.

The fact that the Fiddle icon is not disappearing suggests that there is much more to community culture than trotting out the images of fiddlers on murals for the sake of greater attendance at the annual event. The fiddle remains very much a part of Shelburne's evolving identity: 'Shelburne matters because of Fiddleville'. Images, icons and symbols that are part of the branding process are not passive but highly functional and persuasive potentially rooting the town in closer relationships between community culture and a local economic development process.

Shelburne's new logo, slogan and entrance sign

REGIONAL BRANDING AND REGIONAL BRAIN DRAIN

Derek Jan Fikkers & Frans Coenen, University of Twente, The Netherlands

Introduction

A skilled labour force is essential for the economic development of any region. An increasing number of regions are therefore

investing in a skilled labor force. This is done in various ways. In the INTERREG IIIB-program *Brain Drain, Brain Gain* we have been researching the success of several

policy instruments through which peripheral regions are trying to attract highly educated people. Our research regions were located in The Netherlands (Twente,

Stedendriehoek), Germany (Münsterland, Westphalia), and Switzerland (Lucern, Uri). It turns out that the regional image has a major influence on the extent to which regions succeed in attracting highly educated people. However, we find that major regional branding operations to influence this image lack effectiveness.

Regional brain drain

The six regions in the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland we focus at are all faced with a constant out-migration of highly educated people. Even those who graduate in the region then leave *en masse* for more core-regions in their respective countries. Normally this would not be a problem at all, as long as these migration patterns were compensated by in-migration from other parts of the country. This however is not the case and migration patterns are unbalanced.

Peripheral regions therefore are losing population, and critically, highly educated people. This implies that in such regions the aggregate educational level is falling, especially compared to the core-regions. The harmful consequences are clear. In the first place, they can be explained in economic terms. There are also consequences for the service level in the regions, the region's social capital, or political participation. Then, the question is: why do highly educated people tend to avoid peripheral regions?

The six regions all have a public image that hampers in-migration of highly educated people. The *Stedendriehoek* (Zutphen-Apeldoorn-Deventer) image can be labeled as boring; the Uri and Münsterland image can be labeled as agricultural. Lucern's image might be characterized as 'tasteless tourism'; while the Twente region and the Westphalia region both have an image that is linked with post-industrial remnant of the past. Most public images are related to lacking educational facilities, a lacking cultural supply, lacking economic prospects, etcetera. Because of these images the regions find it too hard to attract highly educated.

We found in our survey that under such circumstances regions might be easily persuaded to implement large-scale regional branding measures. More than 50% of the companies in the respective regions pleaded for such measures in order to be able to attract more highly educated people. This percentage increases as employers experience more difficulty in attracting highly skilled employees. As problems increase, so does the call for regional branding. Under such circumstances regional branding

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Box 4: Brain drain or gain?

There are a wider range of factors that influence individual decision whether or not to move to a certain region. Obvious examples include educational facilities, cost of living, housing facilities, crime rates, cultural facilities, sports facilities, recreational facilities, geographical distance to core-regions, employment possibilities for partners, present-day regional employment, business composition, long-term regional economic prospects. Such factors influence the attractiveness of a region through the mechanism illustrated below.
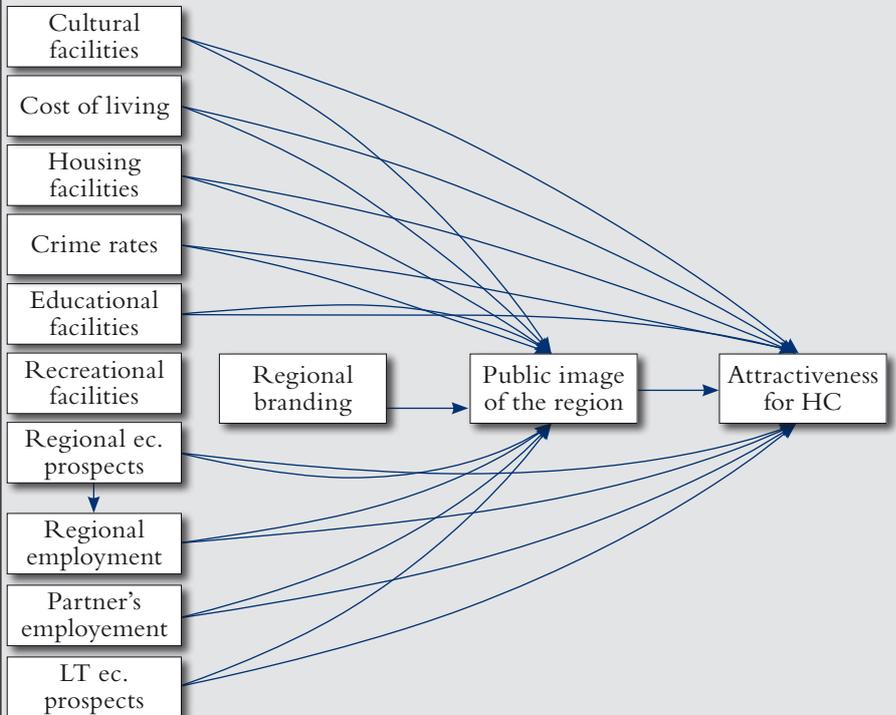

The attractiveness of a region

The factors in the left column determine how attractive a particular region is for highly educated people. The factors have an influence on the attractiveness in two ways. In the first place, they affect the attractiveness directly. In the second place, they have an indirect influence through the component 'public image of the region'. The latter can – theoretically – also be influenced by the component 'regional branding'. The component 'public image of the region' serves as a collective and subjective interpretation of the fairly objective factors such as crime rates, regional economic prospects of housing facilities. Nevertheless, this interpretation has a major influence on the decision whether or not to move to a certain region.

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becomes the *deus ex machina:* investments in regional branding are expected to improve the region's attractiveness obviously. But is this a good solution?

Problems of regional branding

One can wonder to what extent the public image of a region can be improved by regional branding. There are two objections. This first problem is that a public image does not already exist. An example from the Twente region might illustrate this. In the Twente region, large industrial organizations work together in attracting a highly skilled labor force. To achieve this, they try to present the region as a high-tech region that has attractive employment possibilities for highly educated people.
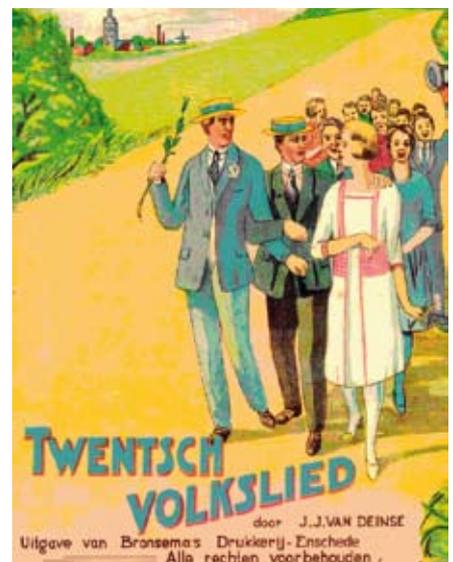
The old industrial image of Twente does not address brain drain

However, at the same time, the regional tourist information office is implementing a national campaign in which the Twente region is presented as a nice region to stay for the elderly that want to flee from the crowded Western part of the country: 'the region where one finds quietness'.

Moreover, at the same time a national diary producer is using the region in its own marketing campaign. In that campaign 'in Twente, one can still smell the 1950s'. Under such circumstances, conflicting interests make it barely possible to implement effective regional branding. This example shows how hard it is to implement an effective regional branding campaign. If the Twente region wants to present itself as a high-tech region in order to solve its brain drain problem this ideally would have consequences for the regional tourist information office and the diary producer.

In the second place, regional branding must have content and must be a representation of reality. If a region wants to present its attractive cultural events, these events must be attractive. Moreover, they must be more attractive than the events in the surrounding regions. The same goes for all other components in the left column. One cannot tell a regional fairy tale, for the simple reason that the region will not back such a fairy tale: regions cannot lie.

The six regions all have a lack of highly educated people. Employers in the regions have major problems attracting a high skilled labor force. However, large scale regional branding does not offer a simple solution. The regions are perceived by highly educated as unattractive for a diverse spectrum of reasons. Cultural facilities, economic prospects and job possibilities for one's partner – for example – are falling short. Despite positive characteristics such as tourist facilities, marginal traffic problems, excellent housing and good schooling, the regional image for outsiders remains negative.

Nevertheless, it is possible to eliminate sources of misunderstanding and this is possible through regional branding. This implies that such branding campaigns need to have two characteristics. In the first place, the campaigns must be reactive. This might sound negative, but it simply means that the region above all must respond to misunderstandings on the region.

In the Twente case it implies that – if the region wants to present itself as high tech – it should respond to misunderstand-ings of the region. In the second place, the approach should not be large-scale and totalising. Every respondent has their own interpretation of regional image and this interpretation can change under different circumstances. In this instance, Twente's image makers ought to target those people who might be interested in that prospect, Twente as a high tech region, namely highly educated people. This can be done through targeted media rather than a generalised branding campaign.

Conclusion

Our research on regional brain drain and regional branding suggests that general branding campaigns to improve a region's public image do not make sense. Such a campaign is necessarily broad-based and not specifically targeted on the priorities and interpretations of the highly educated. In the specific case that a region wants to attract a high skilled labor force, it must get rid of certain negative interpretations that proliferate amongst the individuals it wants to attract. An individual approach that stresses the qualities and does not hide the negative aspects of a region is the answer.

SUCCESS FACTORS OF PLACE BRANDING

Seppo Rainisto, Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences, Finland

Introduction

Places are becoming more and more interested in the strategic marketing model. A new tool in place marketing is 'branding', which has been practiced in private firms successfully for over a century. In contemporary marketing, branding is central, as it integrates all strategic elements into one success formula. Brands are the basis for long-term success for firms and organisations, and drive major mergers and acquisitions. Branding is a potential option for places to establish a place with desired associations. Successful places attract new investment and create a virtuous cycle of success.

Places can be branded just like products and services. 'Place branding' aims especially at increasing the attractiveness of a place (cf. Fikkers & Coenen above). Branding is not just a loose collection of marketing activities, but a holistic development that influences the whole place. Place branding brings added attraction to a place. A branded place makes people aware of the location and connects desirable associations.

It is indeed possible to discover for each place a combination of unique attraction factors to make it different from its competitors. Brand identity is the state of will of the organisation, and the active part of the image building process. Brand identity reflects how the brand wants to be perceived. The brand identity – for place branding – is a unique set of brand associations that the place management wants to create or maintain.

Brand image is the perception of a brand in the minds of people. The brand image is a reflection of the brand personality, what people believe about a brand. But there can be a dissonance between the intended image and the message received by its audience. The message will be influenced by the competing claims of other places which influence the process, especially if the communication strategy is not fixed on the real core values and substance of the place sending it. Even good marketing communication will fail to create an intended image if the basis at the level of the core values and substance is vague. This means that the choice of the core values, shaped to the core identity, will be decisive for the emerging image of a place.

Lessons for place management

Place management has a great challenge in keeping the location progressive and to attract new place development and investments to the location. The existing businesses and residents must also be kept content with the unfolding place brand. Soft new 'clever' managerial methods are needed with the development of the place product. For a long time, it was sufficient for places just to promote the existing place package. Now, the place product needs to be developed and changed according to the place customers´ needs. This complex turnaround requires managerial skills more than ever.

With the tools linked to the 'soul' of a place, identity and image, favourable associations can be created for a place to attract new businesses and visitors to the location, simultaneously increasing the value of the place. Central in place branding is building the identity for the place, which is the active part of management in the process.

The global marketplace brings new locations to the competition, but also new possibilities for places. Global competition is a huge challenge for place management. Also exploiting the opening of international challenges demands new managerial skills, as so many places are presenting their marketing messages, trying to merge their created identities with trustworthy and differentiated place images.

Medium-sized places need more 'critical mass' to be attractive, for instance, for foreign 'faceless' capital. Strategic alliances with other locations can decisively increase the joint-value of all the partners, who all could be in a win-win situation.
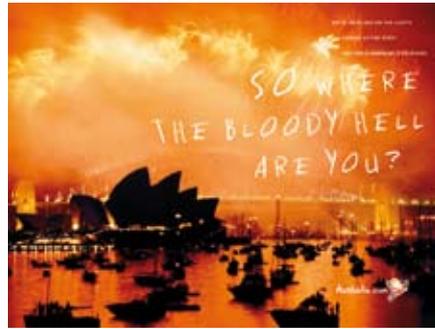
An example of strong national branding

The well-known name of the central city acts as the 'umbrella brand', and building a 'region' with the surrounding towns or municipalities is advantageous to all.

Before 'going global', place management needs to put its own 'nest' in order, and the local development of the place is a demanding task with decreasing allocated economic development resources. Process coincidences can surprise the place management if they have not prepared reserve plans in advance. Strategic planning skills will be increasingly needed.

Places using leadership to manage the place resources in the complex place marketing process are winners. Passively behaving locations will lose their competitive edge. Public-private partnerships can be under the right circumstances an efficient practice to combine resources and manage a bigger place development project. Making these PPPs work effectively will be, together with the leadership skills, the major challenges for place marketing management.

The place has to be managed, and managed growth is much better for a place than unmanaged development. A good management can save the place's image even under negative circumstances, and a bad management can ruin even a good image of a place. There are practical problems, however, linked to the exploitation of the suggestions made. Marketing know-how in general is a scarce resource even for companies, often forming the most important development challenge for the management.

Box 5: Framework of success factors

The theoretical framework for understanding the construction of place branding consists of various success factors which were selected based on the findings of the studies and in the place marketing literature. This is given in figure 1 below.

The framework has three 'dimensions' of success factors. The elements in the inner part (planning group, vision and strategic analysis, place identity and place image, public-private partnerships and leadership) represent the core building stones in place marketing practices.

The elements on the sides of the 'prism' (political unity, global marketplace, local development and process coincidences), meet the challenges in the network and in the macro-environment where the place marketing practices are performed.

The 'how and ability' factors – strategic exploitation, organising capacity, presence of substance, measurement and follow up – bring additional strain to the challenges of place marketing. All these 'how and ability' factors need to be present when practicing place marketing. In fact, all the success factors of the framework are connected and interacting with each other supporting the process of successful practices.

There must be present enough organising capacity for the management of the strategic part of the process, as well as for the operational implementation of the programmes. Organising capacity comprises the capabilities of the management and the resources of the place suggesting that also political unity is needed to achieve the necessary organising capacity for the place. Presence of substance is the 'state of affairs' that has been reached by means of, for instance, organising capacity and the process of the systematic strategic analysis.

Strategic exploitation of individual core issues in place marketing is essential. Without strategic thinking, the operative actions bring success only by accident – or good luck. Also,

Figure 1: Success factors of place branding
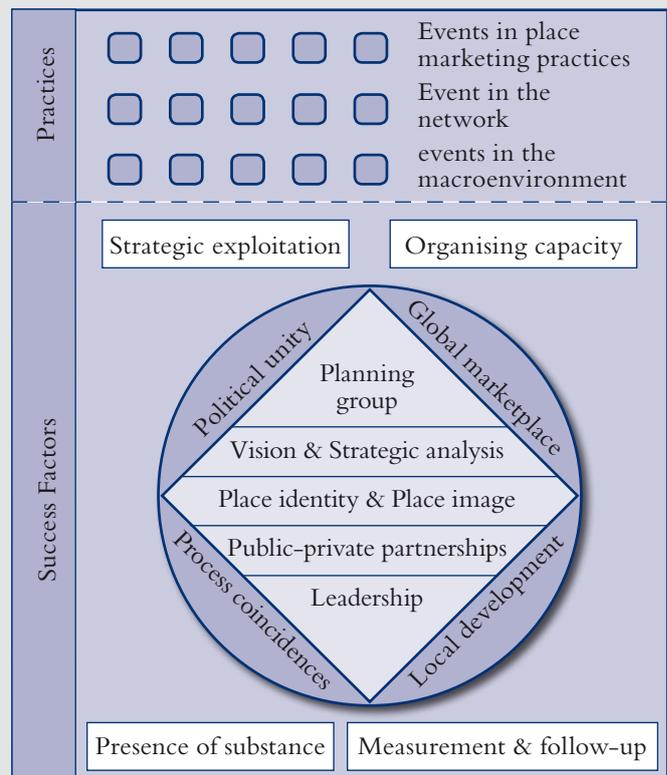
Source: Rainisto, 2003

both the strategy work and the implementation on the operative levels are needed for success.

The strategic work is only the most demanding part of the place marketing challenge. Without measurement and follow-up, no place marketing programme is executed in an ideal way. 'You get what you measure' is also true in place branding.

From the brand concept to the branding process

Strategic marketing involves, in the beginning, strategic analysis. This will then direct in to the necessary strategies and implementation programmes. Also, in evaluating success in place marketing, the goals of the management are the context in which to view what is achieved. Organising capacity is crucial for the success of the place marketing. This means that the place management must establish the required financial and human resources. This leads to the issue of political unity and consistency, which set high challenges for the management of a place.

The branding process is a long-term systematic involvement and, therefore, a sustained effort will take the place further along the learning curve. Also, outside advisors might be useful for consultations, and the best practices of successful places should be studied. Professionalism comes along with the work, as a positive 'process coincidence', and an active effort is always better than putting one's future in the hands of the keen place competition.

A nation can increase its profile in its target markets through a strong brand which is based on the identity of the nation. A professionally managed country brand attracts companies, investments, talented people, residents and visitors. Various dimensions of the effects of a nation brand include public diplomacy, the interests of the export industry, enterprises and investors, destination marketing and the identity and self confidence of the citizens of the country.

The process of building a country brand starts by forming a working (action) group. In the following stage, professional qualitatitive and quantitative research is needed to find out how the nation brand is perceived now internationally by the target markets and in the own country by its own residents.

The research findings are analysed and consulted with experts, players and stakeholders. Then in the strategy building phase the core idea and the identity of the nation brand are formed, with the umbrella brand and sub-brands. Good communication system during the whole process is vital. These initial study and strategy building phases may last 12 and 18 months.

The implementation phase itself will require many years, and the process should never stop. Repositioning of a country brand can take 10 and 15 years. Examples of successful nation branding include Spain, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. The systematic long-term approach of work, consistency, sufficient financial resources and intelligent focusing should be exploited as key elements to secure success in the place branding process.

ON SCALE AND THE UNCLEAR NATURE OF PLACE BRANDING

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Introduction

Over the recent years the concept of place branding has won the hearts and minds of many practitioners and consultants – hardly a surprise. Public authorities are becoming increasingly entrepreneurial and willingly adopt approaches suggested by generously-paid special advisors. What is somewhat surprising however, is the predominantly uncritical praise for such practices voiced by the majority of academics seemingly under the spell of the new concept. Instead of careful examination of suitability and usability of the various aspects of place-branding in place-development policies, the dominant view is to support it, or at most condemn the public authorities for not implementing branding strategies to the full.

Thanks to the recent emergence of specialized outlets the amount of published research has increased markedly, yet the spatial focus remains limited to a country level. Thus paradoxically the growing attention paid to the notion has only marginally contributed to improved understanding. Existing empirical evidence, although growing, is neither sufficiently substantial nor of a satisfactory quality to support the idea.

If anything, close examination would rather suggest rejecting the idea of place branding. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to comprehensively review the literature and examine all the inaccuracies and unclear innovative nature of the whole concept, in this article, I focus on the fundamental issue of the nature of place brands and the meaning of branding in the context of places.

The unclear nature of place brands

To examine the character of branding in the public policy sphere (including regional and urban policy) first one needs to have a proper understanding of the sense of branding in the corporate world. In business terms a brand is 'any name, design, style, words or symbols single or in any combination that distinguish one product from another in the eyes of the customer' (Brassington and Pettitt, 2003).

Consequently, the main function of branding is 'the creation and communication of a three-dimensional character for the product that is not easily copied or damaged by competitors' efforts' (ibid.). In so doing, rather then focusing on PR and advertising, branding goes beyond and 'tries to transform products and services into something more by giving them an emotional dimension with which people can identify' (Van Ham, 2005).

The notion is commonly used thanks to its ability to affects one's perception – a fact well documented by blind product testing (Jobber, 2007). Encompassing social and emotional values brands initiate believes, induce sentiments and prompt behaviours, thus demonstrate the ability to add or take away the perceived value of a product. Essentially a brand acts as a short-cut to an informed buying decision.

Contrary to its 'brand perception', not much has changed over the past few years and place branding remains, as Papadopolous and Heslop (2002) point out, a rather new and to a large extent unknown concept. Even more so if we consider the dominant position of countries as branding objects, and much lesser representation of other spatial scales.

Yet the literature is full of good advice and suggestions for willingly absorbing public authorities at all levels of administrative hierarchies not wanting to 'lag behind' their 'competitors' (or more frequently neighbours) who already embarked on the road to a strong brand. Indeed the current brand of place branding is so strong that 'experts' see only two options for equally a country and other scales of places: either to brand and control the image, thus future economic development or not to brand and surrender the control of its image to others and risk remaining (or becoming) a global backwater.

Consequently, in the case of branding Europe, Van Ham (2005) argues that acknowledging it 'as a force for good in the world will bring pride and self-confi-

dence to Europeans, as well as respect and credibility abroad. For Europe it will be a choice between credibility and decline'.

Despite such definitive statements, there is actually little agreement on the very nature of a place brand and its management. Lodge (2002) stresses that it should entail much more than just icons and imagery, but offers evidence of a common will to offer a competitive and attractive proposition. That 'common will' is perceived as a warranty that things will happen. Additionally Gilmore (2002) advocates that country branding must not be fabrication but amplification of what is already there. 'Country's brand should be rooted in reality and in fundamental truths about the destination and it needs to connect people' (Gilmore, 2002).

Anholt (2002), on the other hand, emphasises that a place cannot be a primary product brand, but a manager of related sub-brands. Therefore it should be perceived as a corporate brand. On contrary, Supphellen and Nygaardsvik (2002) point to the more complex character of a place brand than the corporate one, and stress the multidimensionality and uncontrollability of nation brand perceptions. All these issues naturally become even more complex, if not contradictory, when urban and regional spaces are incorporated.

The problem of trans-scalar transferability

Bridging, however, these two extreme views, Quelcz and Jocz (2005) suggest that while in principle managing place image resembles corporate brand management, the challenges faced by territories and corporations differ significantly, for example the devolved responsibility over brand implementation. In case of a majority of places rather than the strategic decision makers or brand practitioners it is the multiplicity of organisations that decide 'if, when and how' (Parkerson and Saunders, 2005) they will use the brand.

Furthermore Pant (2005) emphasises the complexity and inseparability of a brand: 'A "brand" is not only a name, a term or a differentiator; it is the announcement of a total experience associated with the process of purchase and consumption'. Thus the idea has emerged that a place brand should serve as an umbrella that incorporates and provides meanings to sub-brands targeted at specific sectors, including tourism, exports, FDI and political influences. The place brand is expected to summon general images that are specific enough to catch attention of particular groups and result in a purchase decision (Frasher et al., 2003).

The following ingredients of a successful brand can be discerned, namely the area's export, government international policy, the citizens, cultural exports, tourist experience in the area, attractiveness to foreign investment and talent. While on the one hand this set seems almost to exhaust the public policy sphere, it provides no insights as to how incorporate urban and regional space into in the branding domain. Thus questions need to be asked about 'place branding's transferability between various spatial scales, given the apparent spatial universality of place branding'.

Once the problem of trans-scalar transferability has been solved there still will remain a number of unclear issues linked to place brands and branding process itself, including its proclaimed innovative nature:

1. What is the association between local/regional/national identity and place brands?
2. How does branding differ from long-practiced image building activities?
3. How to measure the efficiency of place brand building?
4. And, finally, the causal question – namely, is the strong place brand a cause or rather the effect of good economic performance of the area?

Obviously the popularity and attractiveness of the notion comes not only from its fashionable nomenclature, but also from the vast research opportunities it presents.

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Regions

THE VOICE OF THE MEMBERSHIP
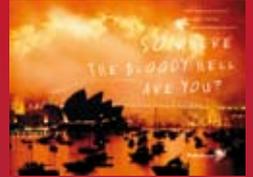
Cities and regions increasingly compete to attract and retain residents, entrepreneurs and visitors. The location choice of people is based more and more on such soft factors as an area's image. Therefore, most territories apply a strategy of 'place branding' now. Place branding campaigns like 'I Amsterdam' and 'The North-East – Passionate People, Passionate Places' are telling cases in point. Does it make sense to invest in 'place branding'? What are the tricks and traps? What is the relationship of branding with the identity of a city or a region?

These and other questions are the topic of the Regional Survey at hand. Eight papers from enthusiastic senior and junior researchers working in the fields of economics, geography, architecture, cultural studies, marketing and policy studies shows the innate multidisciplinarity of the topic.

The scene is set by Rhys David who demonstrates how important it is that places become a brand, lamenting Wales slow progress towards a brand. The intricate links of branding with place identity and image are studied in the two following contributions: Detlev Ipsen and Susanne Kost explore the meaning of place identity for regional development, while Martijn Smit investigates the image of their nation's countryside among Italian students.

Roberta Comunian continues the Italian theme describing Turin's branding and the role of cultural manifestations in attracting the attention of visitors. Laura Cambell presents the case of Shelburne, Ontario, to argue that local culture can be both a means and an end of place branding. Based on evidence from their INTERREG III-project, Derek Jan Fikkers and Frans Coenen are less optimistic about the value of place branding, especially when it comes to counter regional brain drain.

The Survey continues on with a paper by Seppo Rainisto, one of Europe's place branding specialists, on success factors of place branding and ends with a critical piece by Paweł Capik. All in all, the papers make clear that research on place branding is fascinating, but still in an early stage.