

RECALIBRATING CITY BRANDING TO SOCIAL COHESION

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Abstract

Products, services, people, countries, and cities all think themselves in brand terms. The branding of cities has been commonly thought as an image-building strategy and often attacked along with city marketing for boosting gentrification, social inequality and exclusion. A relatively high number of authors argue that city branding leads to socially divisive outcomes by excessively benefiting specific target groups. In contrast, an equivalent number of publications regarding city brands stress the potential they have to create a common identity and define a new shared sense of belonging able to bond residents to the city.

City branding has often followed the trends and methods of business brands. Over the years, business brands have changed evolved and adapted. From first being considered a name and a logo, it is now commonly accepted that brands evoke emotions, generate identity, and create communities. Brand communities are socially constructed entities formed by deep emotional bonds, that share culture, rituals, traditions and codes of behaviour.

City branding can learn from business branding the methods to create a community. In this way city branding contributes to the social cohesion of cities.

City brands have the power to inspire and create cohesion when they are defined in participatory processes and guide the decisions of the development and governance of the city. This conclusion is based on theoretical insights and empirical data from Amsterdam, Barcelona and Rotterdam. The city branding of Rotterdam was treated as a case study.

Keywords: city branding, urban governance, social cohesion, city marketing, city brands

Preface

The controversy surrounding the use of branding on cities inspired this thesis. The debate got me thinking about the relationship between building a narrative, defining identity and connecting people.

Living and growing up in Medellin exposed me to the power of urban interventions and narratives to uplift spirits and generate connections. The glorious days of Pablo Escobar caused among many things, the immigration of high and middle-class families, and high skill professionals; public mistrust and shame of being 'Paisa'—from Medellín. The society was disconnected; people did not trust each other, or media nor the government.

Then a change occurred.

A new rapid transit system was built, El Metro was launched with narratives of modernism, resilience and new beginnings that empowered people and created a Paisa-pride.

My professional experience was also influential in the inquiry of this thesis. As a brand strategist for consumer, business and corporate brands, I have seen the power that brands have to influence, engage and connect. Could it be possible to apply methods of business branding to city brands and create communities around lifestyle values? What if city brands could help cities connect societies?

Previous research made for The Strategic Metropolitan Plan of Barcelona -PEMB, and for BRAND The Urban Agency in Rotterdam gave me insights and knowledge that will be exposed throughout this thesis.

My supervisor prof. dr. Paul Van de Laar has been essential in the development of the ideas, the quality of the questions and the critical approach to the findings.

My second supervisor, dr. Montserrat Pareja-Eastway ignited revolutionary thoughts. Oriol Estela from PEMB and Rinske Brand from BRAND the urban agency, questioned my arguments and theories and connected me to the key actors of this research.

Clarity, depth and simplicity were obtained with the help of Niek and Mischa Sibbel.

The corona family and sr. Blanco gave me emotional support.

I dedicate this thesis to my family; this journey was possible because of them.

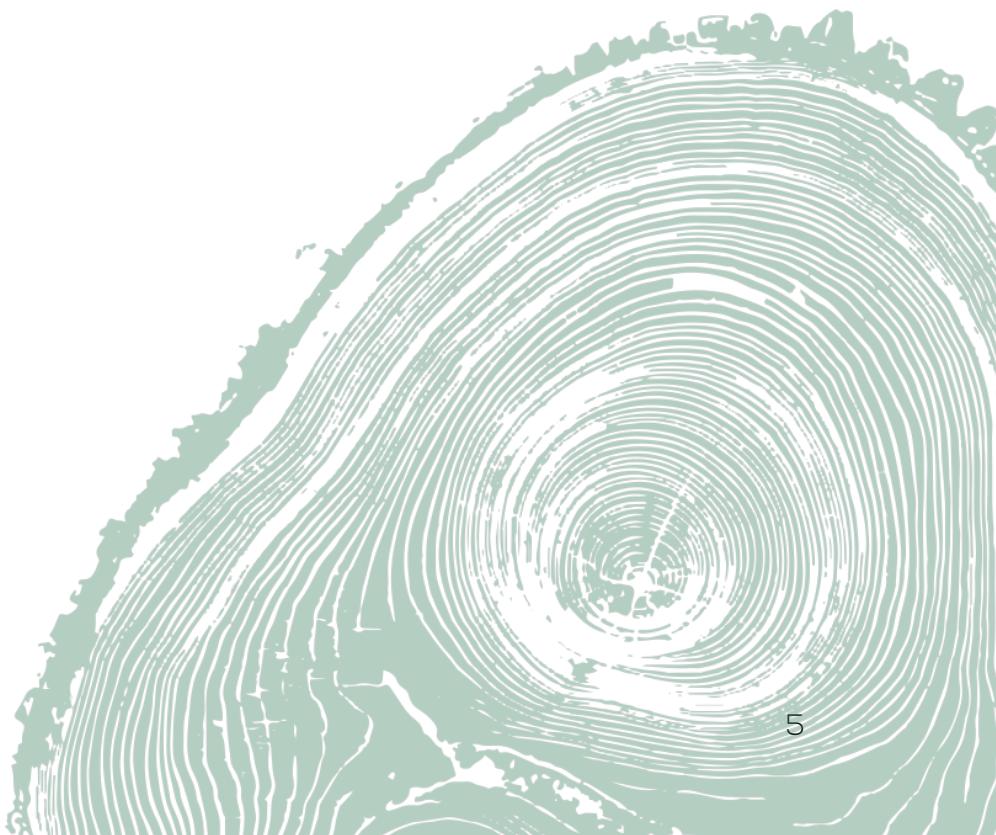
To everyone, **GRACIAS**.

Als je blijft een Dankjewel!

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Power comes into being only if and when humans join themselves for the purpose of action. Binding and promising, combining and covenanting, are the means by which power is kept in existence.

Hannah Arendt

Introduction

We are happier when living together; fulfilling our need to belong generates psychological and physical well-being. In a city, sharing a sense of community contributes to social cohesion, and a lack of social connections can result in isolation and social exclusion. As understood by Eurofound, a cohesive society is resilient, oriented towards the common good and shares a sense of togetherness. By striving towards social cohesion, cities improve their residents' lives and build resilience.¹

Rapid demographical changes have been seen as a threat to the social cohesion of cities, over the last two decades. Polarisation, exclusion and segregation have been a collective concern, as evidenced by numerous accounts to overcome these challenges. The Eurocities *Charter on Integrating Cities*, launched in 2010, identifies social cohesion as a primary responsibility of urban societies; signed in 2015 the sustainable development goal 11 of the United Nations is to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable by 2030; The Urban Agenda of the European Union, launched in 2016, aims to contribute to territorial cohesion and inclusion of migrants and newcomers, and *The Social Affairs Strategy* of 2018 recognised cities as 'frontline managers of social cohesion' that need to promote positive values of diversity to mitigate the risk of polarisation and segregation brought by long term trends of migration.²

Cities as points of destination and transit have always been places of cultural intersection. What has changed, is the pace of movement of people, ideas and capital. Globalisation along with advancements in transportation systems and communication technologies blurred the physical borders between countries. The possibility to work remotely and travel cheaper and faster, increased the migration to western European

¹ Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, Second Edition., Van Nostrand Insight Books ; 5 (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1968); Patricia L. Obst and Katherine M. White, "Choosing to Belong: The Influence of Choice on Social Identification and Psychological Sense of Community," *Journal of Community Psychology* 35, no. 1 (2007): 77–90; Alberto Enríquez Villacorta and Carlos M. Sáenz, "City Strategies and Local Social Cohesion," in *Methodological Guides URB-AL III* (Barcelona: Diputació de Barcelona, 2010), 88; Jan Delhey and Georgi Dragolov, "Happier Together. Social Cohesion and Subjective Well-Being in Europe," *International Journal of Psychology* 51, no. 3 (2016): 163–76.

² United Nations, "Goal 11," 2015, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs11>; Eurocities, "Enhancing Public Perception on Migration and Diversity" (Brussels, Belgium: Eurocities, 2014); Eurocities, "Charter on Integrating Cities" (Brussels, 2010); Peter Neyens, "What Is the Urban Agenda for the EU?," Text, FUTURIUM - European Commission, February 3, 2017; Eurocities, "Inclusive Cities for All: Social Rights in My City," 2019.

cities and societies became 'super diverse'.³ The concept of superdiversity introduced by Vertovec underlines the level of complexity posed by the intersection and conjunction of multiple patterns of immigration. Ethnicity is no longer sufficient to define the societal conditions shaped by the intersection of different variables, such as multiple countries of origin, migration channels, socio-economic and legal status, education, transnational connections, and migrant generations. As exemplified by Scholten, Crul, and van de Laar, Amsterdam, Malmö, and Rotterdam are superdiverse societies with no clear majorities or minorities.

All urban societies have differences in wealth, ethnicity and culture that cause tensions and are potential causes of division. The stability of the society is threatened, and cohesion is put at risk when these disparities are excessive. In superdiverse societies differences tend to grow over time, this may foster "fear, feeling of resentment and humiliation"⁴ and later turn into unhealthy and unhelpful attitudes to race, culture and social solidarity.⁵ According to the Council of Europe, "a cohesive society is one which has developed satisfactory ways of coping with these and other strains in an open and democratic manner," as an example, diversity can be transformed in a way that "becomes a source of mutual enrichment rather than a factor of division and conflict."⁶ The development of cities over the past 50 years, however, seems to be increasing these tensions.

Local governments adopted entrepreneurial ways of management to recover from the crisis of the 1970s caused by deindustrialisation, inflation, the oil embargo, declining public expenditure, and a falling tax base. The increased importance of market conditions started the interurban competition of the 1980s; recognised as a cause of gentrification, segregation and increased inequality.⁷ Cities compete for a relevant position in the global urban hierarchy for foreign investment, tourism, talent, new jobs and overall economic growth. The use of marketing and branding methods for city development came as a

³ Steven Vertovec, "Super-Diversity and Its Implications," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 6 (November 1, 2007): 1024-54.

⁴ Peter Scholten, Maurice Crul, and Paul van de Laar, eds., *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity: The Case of Rotterdam*, IMISCOE Research Series (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 1-3.

⁵ Phil Wood and Charles Landry, *The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage* (London: Routledge, 2008), 319.

⁶ Jane Jenson, *Defining and Measuring Social Cohesion* (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2010), 7.

⁷ David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Jason Hackworth and Neil Smith, "The Changing State of Gentrification," *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 92, no. 4 (2001): 464-77; Xuefei Ren and Roger Keil, *The Globalizing Cities Reader*, Second edition., 1 online resource. vols., The Routledge Urban Reader Series (New York: Routledge, 2017); David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2019).

natural consequence of this new managerial way.⁸ With time, critical voices raised against treating cities as marketable products, ignoring residents needs and displacing vulnerable communities. As pointed by Gleeson, while new urbanologist like Glaeser, Brugmann, Saunders, Florida and Kotkin acknowledged and favoured this urban entrepreneurship; others such as Harvey, Davis, Beck, Neuman and Grande warned against the contradictions, 'collateral damages' and 'predatory' risk of this new urban era.⁹ Sociologists, geographers and urban planners similarly argued that the political nature of city branding benefited specific target groups, i.e. elites, leading to socially dividing outcomes.¹⁰

Residents too complained and accused city branding of being an unsustainable image-building strategy. News about the residents request to remove the "I Amsterdam" letters for being individualistic and not representing the values of the city; Barcelona's 'cities against gentrification' movement and 'No tourists' residents campaign; a port-town outside London opposing immigration; or the lack of enthusiasm of the residents of Rotterdam south for free Eurovision tickets, serve as proof.¹¹ Residents often claimed that the city brand presented an appealing, yet artificial and superficial image of the city, sometimes highly different from reality.

In the place branding literature another story is told; there is evidence that city branding has the potential to create a common identity, a shared sense of belonging and promote residents pride.¹² Critical studies have even moved to consider city branding as a strategy for Placemaking processes that aim to create qualitative places with a strong sense of attachment, i.e. 'sense of place' and empower residents, as stakeholders and co-

⁸ M. Kavaratzis, "From City Marketing to City Branding: An Interdisciplinary Analysis with Reference to Amsterdam, Budapest and Athens" (University of Groningen, 2008); Keith Dinnie, ed., *City Branding: Theory and Cases* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011).

⁹ Brendan Gleeson, "Critical Commentary. The Urban Age: Paradox and Prospect," *Urban Studies* 49, no. 5 (April 1, 2012): 931-43.

¹⁰ S. Oguztimur and U. Akturan, "Synthesis of City Branding Literature (1988-2014) as a Research Domain," *International Journal of Tourism Research* 18, no. 4 (2016): 357-72; Ahmad Bonakdar and Ivonne Audirac, "City Branding and the Link to Urban Planning: Theories, Practices, and Challenges," *Journal of Planning Literature*, October 2019.

¹¹ Jennifer Newton, "Popular 'I Amsterdam' Sign Is Removed from Dutch Capital," *Daily Mail*, December 5, 2018, sec. Travel News; Rachel Hosie, "The Iconic 'I Amsterdam' Sign Has Been Removed for Being 'Too Individualistic,'" *Insider* (blog), 2018; Stephen Burgen, "'Tourists Go Home, Refugees Welcome': Why Barcelona Chose Migrants over Visitors," *The Guardian*, June 25, 2018; Barcelona City Council, "Cities against Gentrification," *Barcelona City Council* (blog), accessed December 15, 2019; Special Report, "Why the Arguments against Immigration Are so Popular," *The Economist*, November 14, 2019; Marcel Potters, "Nog Volop Gratis 'Minima-Kaartjes' Voor Songfestival: Actie Met Twee Weken Verlengd," *pzc.nl*, January 7, 2020.

¹² Warda Belabas and Jasper Eshuis, "Superdiversity and City Branding: Rotterdam in Perspective," in *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity: The Case of Rotterdam*, ed. Peter Scholten, Maurice Crul, and Paul van de Laar, IMISCOE Research Series (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 209-23.

creators of the city brand.¹³ The developments in city branding have often followed broader developments in branding science and practice.

Business brands have evolved through history and are now capable of uniting geographically dispersed people and create communities around their values as evidenced in the literature. Studies around brand communities show them as socially constructed entities formed by deep emotional bonds, with their own culture, rituals, traditions and codes of behaviour.¹⁴ Within a brand experience, people build relationships with the product or service; the brand; other customers, and the company. Since commercial branding has been successful in serving existing and creating new communities, cities may benefit from the best practices of commercial branding strategies. When Nike is able to connect people from diverse ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds, what lesson can city branding officers learn?. Against this background, city branding could develop strategies based on experiences, empirical data and smart branding models, to enable urban brand managers to define place bound methodologies to bring people from diverse backgrounds together, offer an urban based platform to reduce the risks of tensions between newcomers and established residents. If brands have the power to create relationships around their values, perhaps a City Brand has the power to unite multicultural societies by creating a sense of togetherness and a shared identity. **Can city branding be recalibrated towards social cohesion? And if so, which actions should cities need to develop in order to use branding strategies that meet the criteria to connect people from different backgrounds? These issues are discussed and analysed in this thesis.**

¹³ Andrea Insch, "Branding the City as an Attractive Place to Live," in *City Branding: Theory and Cases*, ed. Keith Dinnie (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), 8–14; Erik Braun, Mihalis Kavaratzis, and Sebastian Zenker, "My City – My Brand: The Different Roles of Residents in Place Branding," *Journal of Place Management and Development* 6, no. 1 (2013): 18–28; Mihalis Kavaratzis, "The Participatory Place Branding Process for Tourism: Linking Visitors and Residents Through the City Brand," in *Tourism in the City: Towards an Integrative Agenda on Urban Tourism*, ed. Nicola Bellini and Cecilia Pasquinelli (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 93–107; Bonakdar and Audirac, "City Branding and the Link to Urban Planning: Theories, Practices, and Challenges"; L. Ripoll Gonzalez and L. Lester, "'All for One, One for All': Communicative Processes of Co-creation of Place Brands through Inclusive and Horizontal Stakeholder Collaborative Networks," *Communication & Society* 31, no. 4 (2018): 59–78.

¹⁴ James McAlexander, John Schouten, and Harold Koenig, "Building Brand Community," *Journal of Marketing* 66 (January 1, 2002); Jr. Muniz Albert M. and Thomas C. O'Guinn, "Brand Community," *Journal of Consumer Research* 27, no. 4 (2001): 412–32.

Research aims

To sum up, How can city brands use business brand insights to strive towards cohesive societies? Is the underlying question of this research. Drawing a parallel analysis of the evolution of business and city brands allows us to understand how city brands can become a strategy for social cohesion. The arguments in this thesis follow three stages. In a first step, the concept of social cohesion is explored in order to understand the conceptual underlying forces. This will allow us to examine in a second and third step, the different evolutions of business and city brands and identify how brands could contribute to social cohesion. In a final step, Rotterdam's branding strategies will be discussed. The case study is used to draw general conclusions if and how city brands can become generators of cohesion and which recommendations are to be drawn from the Rotterdam case. By doing so, the conclusion hopes to contribute to a better understanding of how city branding can be used to create social cohesion.

Rotterdam is an interesting case study for three main reasons: (1) The port city of Rotterdam is characterised by its superdiversity, as argued by Scholten, Crul, and van de Laar.¹⁵ (2) Since the 80s – like many port cities of Europe – Rotterdam has discovered the importance of improving the attractivity of the inner city and the potentialities of increasing the number of creative industries to develop alternative economic growth models, which are less port-related. The port-economy in this sense has lost its importance as major job engine since the 1980s. In particular, it generated not enough jobs for the lower classes any more, notably, the increasing workforce of migrant labourers from Turkey and Morocco. Various difficulties of civic life increased the social-cultural tension of this multicultural society, giving momentum to the right-wing movement like Liveable Rotterdam. Within the Netherlands the port-city was framed as poor, working-class and marginalised, because of its status of migration. The city implemented new marketing policies to re-image Rotterdam from a working to a cultural city, which was highlighted in 2001 when Rotterdam was European Capital of Culture.¹⁶ Within the re-branding of Rotterdam the city's superdiversity challenged existing branding strategies. In particular following the drastic political shift when Pim Fortuyn's local party Liveable Rotterdam, ended a period of post-war social-democratic hegemony. His political success and new integration agenda rapidly transformed earlier socio-economic policies which were based on improving the housing, economic perspectives of Rotterdam's minorities. Fortuyn's revolt, however, put an end to Rotterdam's multiculturalism and uses a cultural agenda to try to enforce an assimilation

¹⁵ Scholten, Crul, and van de Laar, *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity*.

¹⁶ S Van de Laar, *Stad van formaat*.

politics.¹⁷ (3) Like many port cities, Rotterdam used waterfront regeneration policies, led by a strong coalition of public-private partnerships to build an iconic waterfront, including the Erasmus bridge, which were all part of a new marketing strategy, but were also a driving force to gentrify urban neighbourhoods in order to re-balance the demographic situation and reduces the share of low-income households, often with a migration background. In particular, Rotterdam South – the former port area which was developed from the 1870s – has experienced state-led gentrification projects supported by “a law specifically created to disperse low-income groups.”¹⁸ Rotterdam has used marketing and branding strategies since the end of 90s to stimulate an autonomous process of gentrification. The successes are positioned internationally, although they have had major consequences for the marginalised groups living there.

Specifically, this thesis addresses the following four research questions:

- 1. What are the major generators of social cohesion?**
- 2. How are business brands able to integrate and connect communities?**
- 3. Which corporate branding strategies can city branding use to contribute to social cohesion and how can these be implemented?**
- 4. How Rotterdam's Branding has evolved? And which lessons are to be learnt from the best practices and branding strategies?**

Relevance

As recognised by the United Nations, The European Union and Eurocities, demographic changes in the population due to trends of migration have and will continue to increase the diversity in cities. As a result, mayors, municipalities and other urban actors play a critical role in fostering connections that integrate these multicultural societies. Community building is a key driver to strive towards social cohesion and reduce risks of social segregation, exclusion and polarisation. The potential of brands to integrate and mobilise communities has not been explored in the literature of city branding. Applying marketing and branding techniques to the management of cities has been increasing since the 1980s and it is now a common practice.¹⁹ City branding strategies have been studied in numerous researches “with a focus on how to produce, create, and manage a brand as

¹⁷ Belabas and Eshuis, “Superdiversity and City Branding”; Warda Belabas, Jasper Eshuis, and Peter Scholten, “Re-Imagining the City: Branding Migration-Related Diversity,” *European Planning Studies* 28, no. 7 (July 2, 2020): 1315–32.

¹⁸ Scholten, Crul, and van de Laar, *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity*, 232.

¹⁹ Michalis Kavaratzis, “From City Marketing to City Branding: Towards a Theoretical Framework for Developing City Brands,” *Place Branding*; Houndsill, no. 1 (2004): 58–73.

well as how to organise and govern a branding process.²⁰ None of these researches has questioned how business brands create community and bring people from diverse backgrounds together. Against this background, researching how brands help generate a cohesive society becomes relevant.

Methodology

This thesis draws a comparative analysis between the evolution of brands and branding in business and cities to lay the framework for the case study of Rotterdam's city branding. Both primary and secondary sources will be used. Books, academic articles and peer-reviewed journals will provide the framework for discussion.

Covid-19 had a serious impact on my research and during the past months I had to adapt my strategies and methodology. Interviewing people during locked down implied that 70% of them were digital (via zoom or video call). The case of Rotterdam was studied through semi-structured interviews with 4 members of the city brand team; and with 4 different stakeholders, analysis of branding materials including relevant policy documents, and websites. The research was enriched by interviewing academics and practitioners:

- Erik Braun, Associate Professor of Marketing and Tourism at the Department of Marketing Copenhagen Business School. He has a PhD in City Marketing from Erasmus University Rotterdam. Place marketing, place branding, branding governance and tourism management are broadly his areas of research. He has researched Rotterdam's city branding for the past 25 years.
- Juan Carlos Beloso, a founding member of the International Place Branding Association IPBA - an independent non-profit association of academics, professionals and policy advisors involved in branding cities. He has been an advisor to the Barcelona City Council in city branding, marketing and development in different periods since the year 2000.
- Two members of the brand team of Barcelona and one of Amsterdam's.

Terms

Branding comprises all decisions, behaviours and strategies made to develop and strengthen a brand. Business brand refers to brands created by organisations to 'do their business' (public, private, profit, non-profit, etc.). Whereas place brands are brands of countries, regions, cities, towns, i.e. places; this research refers specifically to the branding

²⁰ Andrea Lucarelli and Per Olof Berg, "City Branding: A State-of-the-art Review of the Research Domain," *Journal of Place Management and Development* 4, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 18.

of cities. While there is abundant research on business brands and branding, the use of marketing and branding methods to promote urban development started thirty years ago. City branders refers to the people that are part of the public-private coalitions in charge of building the city brand (city council, Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) or city Bureaux, universities, tourist organisation, etc.) City branding theory is still in an emergent phase, and few models are empirically tested.²¹ However, the qualitative models still offer a good starting point for this thesis. I will, therefore, start to identify key aspects of the business brand and branding theory that are relevant for a better understanding of the social-binding potential of city brands.

²¹ Simon Anholt, "Afterword," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 10, no. 2 (May 1, 2014): 167–69; Giuseppe Pedeliento and Mihalis Kavaratzis, "Bridging the Gap between Culture, Identity and Image: A Structurationist Conceptualization of Place Brands and Place Branding," *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 28, no. 3 (2019): 348–63.



1: Social cohesion

A great city relies on those things that engender for its citizens a peculiar and strong attachment, sentiments that separate one specific place from others.

Jane Jacobs

Before dwelling on to the cohesive potential of brands, we first need to set out the concept of social cohesion and identify its major generators.

Cohesion implies connectedness, resilience and a collective goal

Social cohesion has been considered in the literature as a “quasiconcept” developed on both academia and policy discourses.²² Although the concept can be traced back to the mid-twentieth century, the connection of social cohesion and social development gained popularity in Europe and the broader world of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the 1990s. As summarised by Jenson:

The concept of social cohesion made a dramatic comeback in the policy world of ‘after neoliberalism’. It appeared simultaneously in several key organisations... More recently, there has been an upsurge in the attention paid to it in Latin America. Often, the concern was that social cohesion was under threat and policy steps must be taken to reinforce it.²³

No society is fully cohesive, as stated by the European council, “social cohesion is an ideal to be striven for rather than a goal capable of being fully achieved. It constantly needs to be nurtured, improved and adapted.” Societies need to constantly find “afresh a manageable equilibrium of forces” that adapts to social, economic, political and technological changes.²⁴

The notion that increasing social diversity due to newcomers could become a threat of integration and to social cohesion appeared at the beginning of the 2000s.²⁵

²² Jenson, *Defining and Measuring Social Cohesion*, 3.

²³ Jenson, 4.

²⁴ Jenson, 7.

²⁵ Jenson, *Defining and Measuring Social Cohesion*; Bertelsmann Stiftung, “Cohesion Radar. Measuring Cohesiveness. Social Cohesion in Germany—A Preliminary Review” (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012).

Nowadays, both academic and policy discourses break down social cohesion in two aspects:

1. The economic aspect covers concepts of distributive justice and equity in terms of equal opportunities, reducing disparities and social exclusion.²⁶ As conceived by Dragolov et al. this economic cohesion "can be better defined as convergence".²⁷
2. The social aspect deals with social relations, interactions, solidarity, acceptance of diversity, tolerance, and binding. It is based on the experiences and perceptions of people.²⁸

It is widely recognised that social cohesion is "not only a matter of combating social exclusion and poverty. It is also about creating solidarity in society such that exclusion will be minimised."²⁹ As evidenced by Stiglitz et al. and echoed widely in the literature, measuring human progress and the quality of society goes beyond economic indicators.³⁰ With this in consideration, the interest of the present research is on the social dimension of cohesion.

The growing popularity of the social aspect of cohesion bred a considerable amount of definitions in academic and policy studies that emphasised in different aspects. In an extensive review of the literature, Schiefer, van der Noll, Delhey, and Boehnke identified six core components of social cohesion: social relationships, connectedness, orientations towards the common good, share values, inequality/equality, objective and subjective quality of life.³¹ Based on these insights the authors developed a definition that was later reviewed by Dragolov et al. and transformed into an empirical model that has been used by Eurofound and other organisation to measure and compare the cohesion of European, Asian and OECD countries.³² Social cohesion is defined as:

The quality of social cooperation and togetherness of a collective, defined in geopolitical terms, that is expressed in the attitudes and behaviours of its

²⁶ Jenson, *Defining and Measuring Social Cohesion*, 3.

²⁷ Georgi Dragolov, Jan Delhey, and Klaus Boehnke, *Social Cohesion and Well-Being in Europe*, EF 18/035 (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018), 4.

²⁸ Jenson, *Defining and Measuring Social Cohesion*; Georgi Dragolov et al., "Theoretical Framework of the Social Cohesion Radar," in *Social Cohesion in the Western World: What Holds Societies Together: Insights from the Social Cohesion Radar*, ed. Georgi Dragolov et al., SpringerBriefs in Well-Being and Quality of Life Research (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 1–13; Dragolov, Delhey, and Boehnke, *Social Cohesion and Well-Being in Europe*.

²⁹ Jenson, *Defining and Measuring Social Cohesion*, 7.

³⁰ Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen, and Jean Fitoussi, "Report of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (CMEPSP)," January 1, 2009.

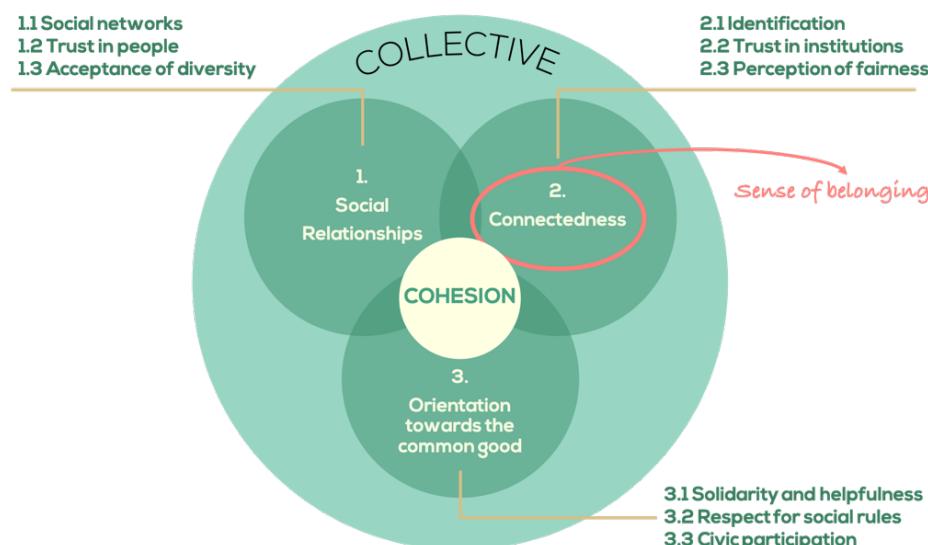
³¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, "Cohesion Radar. Measuring Cohesiveness. Social Cohesion in Germany—A Preliminary Review."

³² Dragolov et al., "Theoretical Framework of the Social Cohesion Radar"; Eurofound and Bertelsmann Stiftung, *Social Cohesion and Well-Being in the EU* (Dublin, and Gütersloh, Germany, Bertelsmann Stiftung: Eurofound, 2014).

members. A cohesive society is characterized by resilient social relations, a positive emotional connectedness between its members and the community, and a pronounced focus on the common good.

In this context, social cohesion comprises three domains, which in turn unfold into three dimensions (figure 1). **Social relations** unfold in resilient social networks; trust in others; and acceptance and recognition of diversity. **Connectedness** is related to sense of belonging and community and it comprises identification; trust in institutions; and perceptions of fairness. **Orientation towards the common good** considers solidarity and helpfulness, respect for fundamental social rules and civic participation.

Figure 1: Three domains of social cohesion with their specific dimensions



Source: Own illustration following Dragolov, Ignácz, Lorenz, Delhey and Boehnke.³³

Both studies (Schiefer et al. and Dragolov et al.) exclude Equality, Subjective quality of life and Shared values because Equality or inclusion is seen as an **unconditional variable** of social cohesion. Similarly, the council of Europe considers vital to reduce poverty and help vulnerable members of society to maintain social cohesion. Both models recognise shared values as another generator of social cohesion, but they are not included in the model due to a lack of clarity in what and how to empirically measure them. In words of

³³ Dragolov et al., "Theoretical Framework of the Social Cohesion Radar."

Dragolov, Delhey, and Boehnke, "a strong normative stance would be required to set out [these] values."³⁴ Quality of life is considered in both models as a consequence and not a generator.

Strategic planning can generate social cohesion

The cooperation program URB-AL developed by the European Commission between European and Latin American cities -to support regional integration, increase the competitiveness of Latin America and facilitate the transfer of European know-how³⁵ - created a guide to actively introduced social cohesion in the planning of cities. Aiming to:

Gradually and sustainably progress towards cities in which citizens share a sense of belonging and inclusion, participate actively in public affairs, recognise and tolerate differences, and enjoy relative equity in access to public goods and services and in terms of distribution of wealth. All this, in a framework where institutions generate trust and legitimacy, and citizenship is fully exercised.³⁶

The report defined five generators of cohesion to be considered in the planning of cities: Inclusion, legitimacy, residents participation, recognition, and a shared sense of belonging. Inclusion and legitimacy are related mainly to the economic dimension of cohesion, while residents participation, recognition and a shared sense of belonging mainly impact the social and emotional dimension of cohesion.

For the URB-AL III model inclusion is also considered an unconditional variable for cohesion. Legitimacy refers to the strategic actions made by private and public institutions to enable the connection between the community and the representativeness of such institutions. As already established, the interest of this research is the social aspect of cohesion therefore, the generators of social cohesion that could be influenced by the brand are: residents participation, recognition, and a shared sense of belonging. As defined by URB-AL III:

- **Participation:** considers the involvement of citizens in all types of public matters (not only political).
- **Recognition:** refers to the acceptance and recognition of diversity. And considers a positive mediation of differences in identity, religion, culture, politics, ethnicity, values and any other type of difference that characterises a society.

³⁴ Dragolov, Delhey, and Boehnke, *Social Cohesion and Well-Being in Europe*, 6.

³⁵ Finn Laursen, *Comparative Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2010), 151.

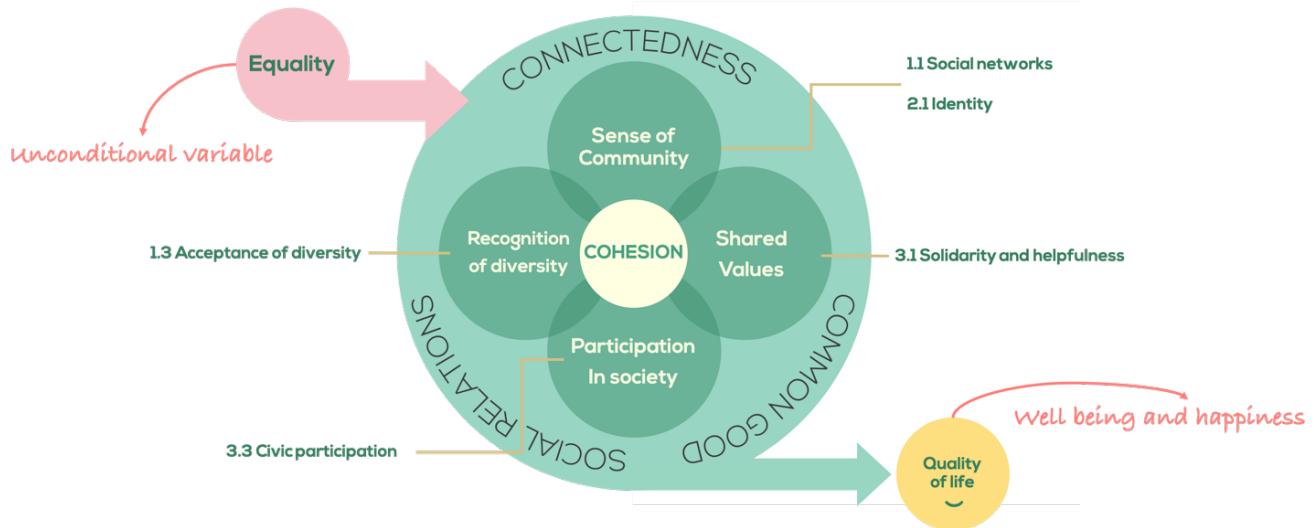
³⁶ Villacorta and Sáenz, "City Strategies and Local Social Cohesion," 23.

- **Sense of belonging:** means instilling a sense of 'social connection' in the framework of which residents share **basic values** and commitments.³⁷

These generators of cohesion relate to the three domains of the multidimensional model of Dragolov et al, specifically with five of the nine dimensions (Figure 2).

- **Participation** includes civic participation and public discussion.
- **Recognition** is related to acceptance of diversity.
- **Sense of belonging** as a concept is interwoven with the dimension of shared identity in the multidimensional model of Dragolov et al. (2013). The definition of URB-AL III, however, also considers the dimension of strong and resilient social networks, and the sharing of basic values. This extended definition applies more to the **sense of community** considered in the recent update of Dragolov et al. (2018). The increased mobility of European societies and the growing problem of social isolation stresses the need to promote social relations that generate feelings of attachment of people to their local community.³⁸
- **Shared values** include solidarity and helpfulness. In multicultural cities, tolerance and acceptance of different culture are essential to generate recognition of diversity.

Figure 2: Generators of Social Cohesion



³⁷ Villacorta and Sáenz, 24.

³⁸ Dragolov, Delhey, and Boehnke, *Social Cohesion and Well-Being in Europe*, 37–44.

So far, we have set out in detail the concept of social cohesion along with the latest frameworks used to measure and compare countries, which allowed us to identify the major generators of social cohesion that will be considered in this thesis as the generators to be strengthened by city brands. That is shared values, participation in society, recognition of diversity and sense of community.

2: Brands for business

What, in the end, makes advertisements so superior to criticism? Not what the moving red neon sign says— but the fiery pool reflecting it in the asphalt.

Walter Benjamin

The history of brands is a history of ownership, reputation and identity; it deals with behaviour, values, image, and relationships. Throughout their history, brands have been used to influence, manipulate, differentiate and connect. Brands have evolved from names and symbols into complex compositions of social signifiers. How are business brands able to integrate and connect communities? Looking into history will allow us to understand how brands evolved from marks on products into brands of communities and how do they enable social connections.

2.1 From brands that mark to brands that bind

The origin of 'brand symbols' has been traced to the first seals of early language around 2250 BC, as symbols made for trademarking and business transactions. These early brands stated the origin, the quality, the performance of the product, and in some cases they symbolised power or status with a monarchy crest or a religious deity.³⁹ The terms brand and branding originated during the 5th century with the marking of cattle, slaves, criminals and products. The branding made with embers or hot irons left marks that served to identify and distinguish, and signified ownership, quality and status.

A brief history of brands and branding

For the purpose of our research a more recent history of brands is considered, starting after the first World War, when Edward Bernays introduced the theory of war propaganda

³⁹ Karl Moore and Susan Reid, "The Birth of Brand: 4000 Years of Branding," *Business History* 50, no. 4 (July 2008): 419–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00076790802106299>; Wilson Bastos and Sidney J. Levy, "A History of the Concept of Branding: Practice and Theory," *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* 4, no. 3 (January 1, 2012): 347–68, <https://doi.org/10.1108/17557501211252934>.

to the marketing of products.⁴⁰ Bernays applied Freud's theory and redefined products by linking them to emotions. For the first time, the features and composition of a product were not as relevant as the subconscious desires that the brand could satisfy. In words of Kornberger: "the object itself had become irrelevant; what counted was the symbolic dimension of the object and the way people related to it emotionally."⁴¹ Cigarettes became a symbol of freedom and rebellion in 1928 under Bernays' direction; the use of war propaganda in this campaign can be regarded as a force that launched a 'creative destruction' for brands, that is, brands which focused only on the merits of products were doomed to be irrelevant in the eyes of the consumers. This marked the beginning of the consumer society, and from here on, marketing thinking was enriched with psychological theories, insights, and research methods.⁴²

The 'Consumer Revolution' came after the Second World War with a proliferation of products, brands and fierce competition. Three main factors caused the revolution: (1) an extended productive capacity previously created for the war effort, (2) the accumulation of capital, and (3) a "pent-up consumer demand."⁴³ The production of goods was overflowing and the eagerness to buy resulted in an intense competition that forced marketing teams to manage their 'brand image' in order to differentiate; consumers' choice was now made based on the brand as the 'difference between products became hardly distinctive. The idea of Brand Image introduced in 1955 by Gardener and Levy, solidified the importance of branding and brand management by proving, once more, that consumers perceived products and brands as complex entities with different personalities and not "merely as bundles of features and obvious benefits." As argued by Levy, "[they] discovered the explanatory power of the concept of imagery, and characterized a brand as a complex symbol that incorporates consumers' motives, feelings, logic, and attitudes".⁴⁴ By the 1950s, multinationals had created the role of the brand manager to build their brands image by managing the 'marketing mix' and defend their position and reputation in the market.

In the same decade, Ernest Dichter created The Focus Group that allowed the brand managers to go deep into the self of consumers and understand their barriers to certain actions.⁴⁵ By the end of the 60s, citizens had transformed into consumers of brands and brand managers became obsessed with understanding the behaviour of

⁴⁰ Edward Bernays worked in the propaganda machine of the US during the World War I. His uncle was Sigmund Freud.

⁴¹ Kornberger, *Brand Society*, 8.

⁴² Bastos and Levy, "A History of the Concept of Branding."

⁴³ Ibid, 355.

⁴⁴ Levy, *Brands, Consumers, Symbols and Research*, 128.

⁴⁵ Kornberger, *Brand Society*, 9.

consumers. Aiming to create strong and loyal relationships with the consumers, marketing research techniques kept on evolving during the next decades.

As brands evolved in complexity, organisations became aware of the need to manage the brand. **Brand equity** and **the strategic management of brands** came into bloom with Leuthesser, Feldwick, Keller and Aaker at the beginning of the 90s.⁴⁶ There are two dominant conceptions of brand equity in the literature:

1. brand equity as the added value of the brand perceived by the customer
2. brand equity as the financial profit of the brand for the organisation.

Brand equity is by me defined as the power of the brand to generate a preference in the consumer's mind and deliver value to the organisation. This power relies on the management of the so-called brand assets: brand awareness, brand reputation, brand personality, brand values, perceived consumer imaginary, brand loyalty, brand associations, patents and rights (Table 1).

Table 1: Brand assets and equity

Brand Assets	Brand value (financial equity)
Brand awareness	
Brand reputation	
Perceived B. personality	
Perceived Brand values	
Brand Image	
Brand attachment/ preference	
Patents and rights	Net discounted cashflow Attributable to the brand after paying the cost of capital invested to produce and run the business and the cost of marketing.

Source: Own illustration adapted from Jean-Noël Kapferer⁴⁷.

The experience economy materialised at the turn of the 21st century, along with social media and technological advancements that transformed markets, business models and brands. New production methods enabled mass customization, which meant that companies now offered customised products massively. To avoid becoming a business of commodities, "the concept of selling experiences spread beyond theatres and theme

⁴⁶ *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, 4th Edition, 4th edition (Boston: Pearson, 2012); David A. Aaker, *Managing Brand Equity* (Simon and Schuster, 2009); Kevin Lane Keller, "Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity," *Journal of Marketing* 57, no. 1 (1993): 1-22, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1252054>; Kevin Lane Keller, "Brand Synthesis: The Multidimensionality of Brand Knowledge," *Journal of Consumer Research* 29, no. 4 (2003): 595-600.

⁴⁷ Jean-Noël Kapferer, *The New Strategic Brand Management: Advanced Insights and Strategic Thinking* (Kogan Page Publishers, 2012), 14.

parks.”⁴⁸ Organisations wanted to build brand experiences that promoted consumer participation and connection; the Disney experience was often mentioned as an inspiration. The development of communication technologies allowed consumers to interact with companies and play an active role in the creation of brands, which in turn enabled the creation of communities around lifestyles.

Consumers that integrated into the brand’s community became ambassadors of the brand and a valuable source of feedback inside the organisation, which allowed companies to improve the value proposition or unique selling points.⁴⁹ As brand experiences enabled the creation of brand communities, brands started to be seen at a corporate level, and branding was now used inside and outside the organisation, to mobilise different stakeholders. Human resources, sales, finance, and every department had to ‘live by the brand’.⁵⁰

Brand values and missions are used inside and outside the organisation to connect and mobilise towards common goals, and some brands are capable of creating larger movements. Brand activism is a trend driven by consumer behaviour that implies taking a stand on social, environmental, or political issues. The brand community of Patagonia is a network of “over 3,000 businesses and individuals that contribute to environmental non-profits in over 90 countries”, as stated in the company’s webpage, the community has “directed over \$250 million to grassroots organisations working toward a better world”.⁵¹

In the course of their history, brands have evolved into complex systems that actively create meaning; they have crossed and transformed other dimensions of society. Products, services, people, sport teams, religious sects, countries, and cities, all think of themselves in brand terms, as evidenced in the literature, they compete to attract and influence different audiences and targets.⁵² The evolution of brands can be divided into three stages: starting from when brands were a marketing tool to attract and create preference, to brand managed by branding strategies and brand teams to engage consumers and build a reputation, ending as brands guiding the management of the organisation and creating communities around lifestyles (Figure 3).

⁴⁸ B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, “Welcome to the Experience Economy,” *Harvard Business Review*, July 1, 1998, <https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy>.

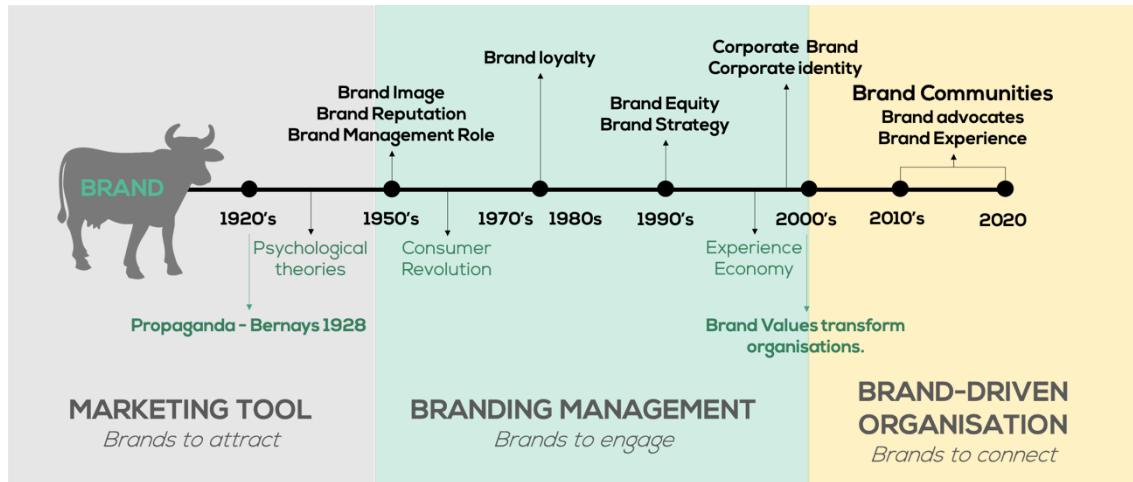
⁴⁹ Muniz and O’Guinn, “Brand Community”; McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig, “Building Brand Community.”

⁵⁰ Timothy W. Aurand, Linda Gorchels, and Terrence R. Bishop, “Human Resource Management’s Role in Internal Branding: An Opportunity for Cross-functional Brand Message Synergy,” *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 14, no. 3 (January 1, 2005): 163–69.

⁵¹ Patagonia, “1% for the Planet,” [Onepercentfortheplanet.org](https://onepercentfortheplanet.org), accessed June 1, 2020.

⁵² Simon Anholt, “Some Important Distinctions in Place Branding,” *Place Branding* 1, no. 2 (March 1, 2005): 116–21; Kornberger, *Brand Society*; Kapferer, *The New Strategic Brand Management*; Keith Dinnie, “Introduction to the Theory of City Branding,” in *City Branding: Theory and Cases*, ed. Keith Dinnie (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), 3–7.

Figure 3: evolution of city brands through branding



One hundred years of history show how the emergence of a new competitor, a new technology, a new research method or a new managerial way of thinking influenced the conception of brands and the branding methods used to manage the brand. Kapferer identified thirteen definitions of what is a brand that could be placed on our history timeline (Table 2).⁵³ Historical changes bred new definitions of brands, but they did not make the old definitions obsolete.

Table 2: Historical evolution of the definitions of a brand

Definition: What is a brand?

1	Name and/or sign guarantees a product's origin and authenticity
2	Name of a different and superior product
3	An identity endowed on a product to make it unique and superior
4	A position strongly held in the consumer's mind
5	A name that means a trusted promise
6	A name that denotes a benefit or a set of values in people's minds
7	A name that adds value beyond the utility of the product it signifies
8	A name with the power to influence markets
9	A name that creates desire and loyalty
10	A name that makes people forget the price
11	The name of a remarkable value proposition
12	A name commanding respect, admiration, love and passion
13	A name that is able to create a community around its values.

Source: Own Illustration Following the Historical evolution of brand by Jean-Noël Kapferer⁵⁴.

⁵³ The historical evolution of what is a brand is in Kapferer, *The New Strategic Brand Management*, 12.

⁵⁴ Kapferer, 12.

The 'brand society' is full of brands that fall within any of Kapferer's definitions, such as Nike and DHL. Both brands were created in the 60s but evolved in different ways, two relatively obvious reasons are: (1) a different demand and involvement of the consumers with the product and industry, (2) different strategic decisions of the companies. The definition of the brand Nike falls into the last definition of Kapferer: a 'name that is able to create a community around its value(s)'. DHL on the other hand, falls into the definition of 'a name of a remarkable value proposition'. The interest of this research is to understand the type of brands that create communities. To achieve this goal, we will make a brief journey into the history of brand communities in order to understand how they are created.

Customer experiences enable the relationships of the community

Brand communities are woven by the social relationships that come about in a shared consumer experience. Internationally known examples of communities created by brands are Nike, Jeep, Lego, Patagonia, and Harley-Davidson. These communities "are complex entities with their own cultures, rituals, traditions and codes of behaviour," they are based on "a structured set of social relationships among the admirers of a brand"; and as time passes, "members appear to derive an aspect of personal identity from their membership and participation in these communities."⁵⁵

The concept of Brand Community was first developed from a sociologist perspective by Muniz and O'Guinn, who evidenced consciousness of kind; shared rituals and traditions; and a sense of moral responsibility in brand communities, these findings were later proved and expanded by McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig.⁵⁶ The research of McAlexander et al. proved that it is the consumer but not the brand that is central to the community, as "the existence and meaningfulness of the community" are based on the consumers' perception of the brand, the company, the product and other customers.⁵⁷ As said by McAlexander et al.:

Products are purchased and consumed in the context of social and business relationships, which in turn influence feelings about the products specifically and brands more generally. Each relationship connects to all the others through the central nexus of consumer experience, creating the holistic

⁵⁵ Schau and Muñiz, "Brand Communities and Personal Identities," 344.

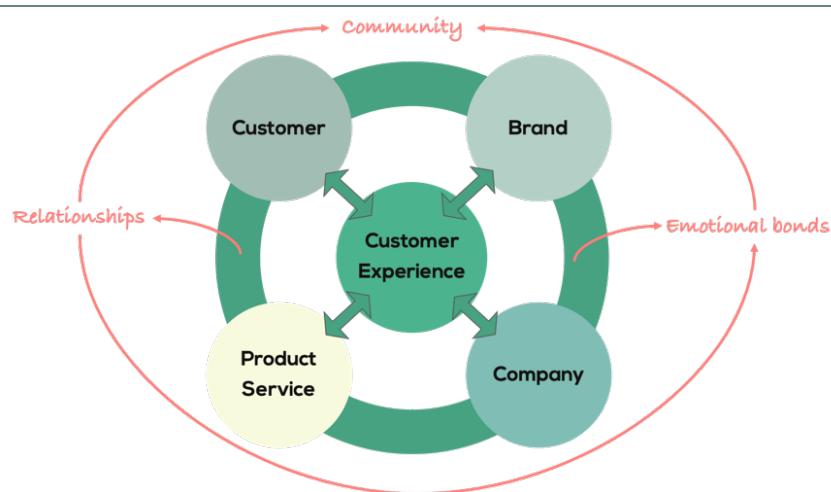
⁵⁶ Muniz and O'Guinn, "Brand Community," 428.

⁵⁷ McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig, "Building Brand Community," 39.

sense of a surrounding community. Moreover, each relationship acts as a personal linkage to the brand community.⁵⁸

A brand community is created when the interactions of the experience evolve into emotional bonds. The member of the Jeep community studied by McAlexander et al. developed "real and stronger ties" during the BrandFest experience; they developed stronger relationships with their vehicles, the brand, the company, and other owners.⁵⁹ *The Customer-Centric Model of Brand Community* takes into account all the relationships that the consumer develops within the brand experience (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Brand Community from a customer perspective



Source: Own Illustration adapted from McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig.

Not all brand experiences create communities. The level of involvement is impacted by the frequency and quality of interactions, the communication channel, and the perceived relevance of the brand in the consumers' lifestyle. Consumers integrate into the community by living, feeling, and hearing the brand through different contacts that create mental associations and behavioural responses.⁶⁰ A customer-centric brand experience coherent through all different contact points creates a surrounding community that generates a sense of community between people that previously shared no other connection than the consumption of a brand.⁶¹ Relationships are created between the different stakeholders of the brand.

⁵⁸ McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig, 48.

⁵⁹ McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig, 44.

⁶⁰ J. Joško Brakus, Bernd H Schmitt, and Lia Zarantonello, "Brand Experience: What Is It? How Is It Measured? Does It Affect Loyalty?", *Journal of Marketing* 73, no. 3 (May 2009): 53.

⁶¹ Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello, 54.

A community centred in the customer transforms the organisation

A brand community perspective that considers customer experience essential becomes a catalyst for companies and brands. Consumers must 'live' the experience of the brand in all the different touchpoints of interaction, which means that it is as essential to care for the product as for the interaction between an employee and the customer. All the interactions of the customers' experience must be 'on-brand' or aligned with the brand assets in order to strengthen the relationships within the brand community. The case of ING researched by Martin Kornberger serves as a clear example of this: since 1991, the company grew by acquisitions; buying around 50 different brands. In early 2000s ING decided to become one brand and build their reputation worldwide. After years of changes and research, they decided to position ING around one single value: 'easier'. The 'easier' concept turned out to be complex:

What people meant by easier was easy to contact; be able to give a clear overview of what you're doing for me; if you are transparent; if you are fast and efficient; and if you can provide me advice when I need it - then people would regard ING as 'easier'. 'Easier' communicates a clear advantage, a clear value for the consumer.⁶²

To fulfil the 'easier' promise the company had to fundamentally transform; they had to become 'easier' inside the company. In order to become 'easier' ING had to eliminate barriers for the customers at all business levels. As expressed by ING's Global Head of Brand Marketing, Ruud Polet:

That's what my job as brand manager is... it is not a branding topic but a business topic. It's a change programme, not a marketing initiative. The brand becomes an integrative platform - change people, HR people, marketing people, IT people, executives. The brand is the common territory for discussing issues and aligning solutions. For instance, our CEO banks on the brand - he is now Chief Easier Officer, with his key responsibility being to drive the concept of 'easier'. In summary, the brand becomes the internal organizing principle of ING.⁶³

The creation of a brand community and a brand experience goes beyond the realms of the brand team. For the brand experience to be 'on brand' it is necessary that the organisation transforms as a whole and 'lives by' the brand.

⁶² Kornberger, *Brand Society*, 11.

⁶³ Ibid.

Cynicism inside companies grew during the recession of 2008–09, employees felt disposable and realised they were “simply part of the workforce”, this in turn lowered the involvement with the company and consequently, with the brand. In words of Kapferer, “Inside companies people [became] cynical about mission statements and other pompous declarations of intent that have proven to be mere words.”⁶⁴ Brands proved to be an efficient strategy to mobilise and inspire employees, bringing pride both inside and outside. Companies that changed from managing the brand to manage by the brand expanded their corporate focus from reputation to brand compliance and created more meaningful connection with both the consumers and the employees.

Inspiring employees is nowadays central to building the brand; they contribute to creating preference, loyalty, and ultimately communities. Employees that are aligned with the brand act consistently to build better brand perception, they also become guardians of the brands and catalysts of change. Adidas is a recent example of this: during the Black Lives Matter movement the brand made public statements supporting the black community, as a response the employees wrote a letter claiming a lack of coherence with the workplace culture and evidencing how within the leading group of 22 none is a black executive. That has to change, employees wrote in the leaked letter, the company has now set quotas of 30 percent of new job openings for Latino or black worker.⁶⁵

Up to now, we have discussed on a broad scale the most relevant historical changes of the use of brands, i.e. branding. By tracing these changes, we discover the power of brands grew to create communities around their values and transform the management and structure of the organisation. Brands need to inspire and engage all their stakeholders by delivering a consistent brand experience. An overarching notion has been taken for granted: How do companies create the brands that create communities?

The second part of this chapter will try to answer this question based primarily on the theory of Jean-Noël Kapferer, who is an international authority on brand management. His book: *The New Strategic Brand Management* presents a considerable amount of different local and global cases, and throughout its five editions it has been adopted by business schools and MBA programmes worldwide and established as a reference for brand strategist and scholars.

⁶⁴ Kapferer, *The New Strategic Brand Management*, 29.

⁶⁵ Christiaan Pelgrim, “Het Nieuwe ‘Merkactivisme’: Bedrijven Buitelen over Elkaar Heen in Steun Voor Anti-Racisme,” *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, June 10, 2020, nrc. nl edition.

2.2 Brand coherence connects communities

The evolution of brands has been a continuous change from a simpler to a more complex nature, the appearance of new aspects and elements led to the development of different types of brands. Throughout the three stages of evolution, brand management has amplified its focus. Brands to attract focused on creating and managing a **brand image**. Brands to engage focused on differentiation defining **value propositions**, concepts and unique selling points. Brands to connect focused on living by the brand and delivering a **consistent experience** inside and outside the organisation.

Brands are complex holographic systems

The power to create a community develops as a result of consistent and coherent management of the brand image, the brand value propositions, and the brand experience.⁶⁶ Each one of these aspects entails elements of the brand that are defined and managed through different models and often multidisciplinary teams.

- **Brand image:** includes name, personality, imaginary, territory, influencers and other brand assets. The brand DNA, The brand personality scale and The identity prism are some of the models used by the company's brand team along with the creative and PR (public relations) agencies to define and manage this aspect.
- **Brand concept and value proposition:** tangible and intangible attributes and benefits that differentiate from the market, and create value to the different audiences. Multidisciplinary teams of brand, marketing, sales, finance, operations and other areas define this aspect using models like the business and value proposition Canvas, or the Value statement.
- **Brand experience:** as already established, it entails the management of all the interactions within the points of contact with the user. The business canvas and the customer journeys are often tools used to manage this aspect. Depending on the product or service this aspect is co-created with different teams. Top management and areas of customer experience, marketing, human resources, sales, technology, call centres often define and execute with the brand team this aspect.

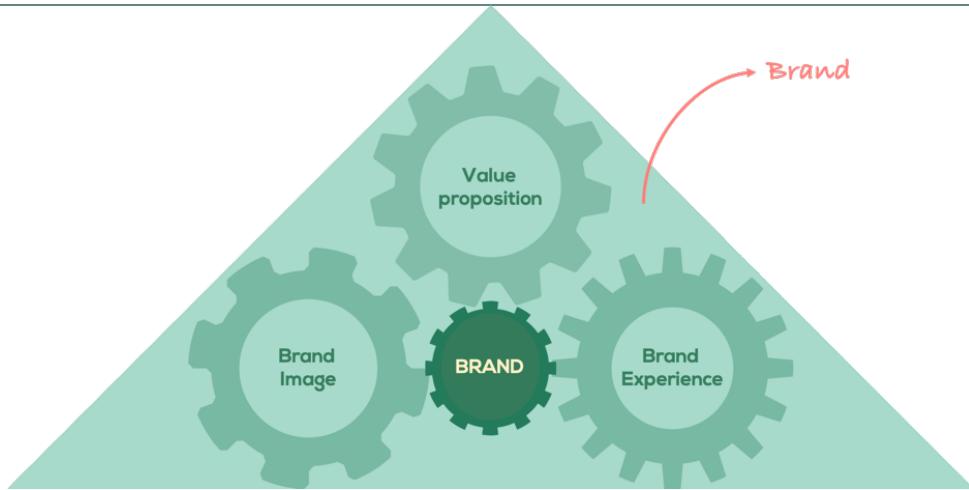
Like a hologram the information of the brand is distributed throughout the different aspects "if you break off a piece of the hologram, you don't get a piece of the image: you get the whole image, although not as sharply defined."⁶⁷ The three aspects of the brand are interdependent and interconnected, and their interaction creates the brand as a

⁶⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁷ Sherrie Reynolds, *Learning Is a Verb: The Psychology of Teaching and Learning* (Taylor & Francis, 2017), 22.

whole (figure 5). To manage a brand is to oversee the brand as a system and orchestrate the network of processes, relationships, definitions, and associations.

Figure 5: Brands as whole systems



Source: own illustration adapted from the brand system of Jean-Noël Kapferer.

Brand communities are built with internal coherence

Coherence between the three aspects is essential to build the brand and with time connect a community. To achieve coherence brand management uses the so-called **brand platform** that is, a document specifying the normative foundations of the brand such as the values, benefits, characteristics and heritage. The brand platform is the central axis of the brand system that integrates and guides the decisions of the organisation and the three brand aspects. A sharply written brand platform defines the brand identity and the brand positioning, and evidences the gap between the current state of the brand and the objective. Strategies must aim to bridge this gap in order to build the defined brand perception. In words of Kapferer the brand platform is the "normative blueprint" of the organisation, "this base is integrative and normative: it must be upheld in order to introduce a necessary coherence if the market is to have a clear, readable perception of the brand."⁶⁸

There are different models of brand platforms, such as *The Brand Pyramid Platform* or the *Bulls' eye*, they express the *brand essence, personality, values, pillars, territories and distinctive attributes*. Kapferer illustrates how these brand platforms are

⁶⁸ Jean-Noël Kapferer, "Paris as a Brand," in *City Branding: Theory and Cases*, ed. Keith Dinnie (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), 249, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230294790_25.

outdated and do not enable the brand to create communities. Defining the brand in "the brand essence" forces the definition to catchy words that are often vague and redundant "static concepts" unable to engage and mobilise consumers or employees. The increased "sophistication" of the brand platform, he argues, made of redundant "nice words" are incapable of leading companies, inspire teams and help make business decisions.⁶⁹ As a response to this useless complexity and sophistication, Kapferer proposes ten steps towards a platform that creates communities, allowing companies to clearly state what the brand stands for and why the consumer should commit to the brand (Table 3). Instead of forcing the definition of the brand in a brand essence, the brand must be defined by the role it plays in the customers' lives, in words of Mc Alexander et al., the brand platform is customer-centric.

Table 3: Ten steps to define a brand that creates community

The diagram illustrates the 10 steps to define a brand that creates community. A vertical double-headed arrow on the right indicates a flow from 'Top-down Brand management' (down) to 'Bottom-up Brand perception' (up). The 10 steps are listed in a table below the arrow.

Top-down Brand management	Step 1	Why must this brand exist?
	Step 2	What is the brand's long-term vision?
	Step 3	What does the brand want to change in people's lives?
	Step 4	What are our values?
	Step 5	What is the brand's specific know-how?
	Step 6	What is our Heritage?
	Step 7	Where is our territory?
	Step 8	Which products/ services and actions best embody the values?
	Step 9	How do we communicate (style and language)?
	Step 10	Who are we addressing? What image do we render of themselves?

**Bottom-up
Brand perception**

Source: own creation adapted from Jean-Noël Kapferer.

Answering these ten questions defines the brand platform that will guide the decisions of the organisation and different teams to inspire relationships within the community.⁷⁰ When the brand platform is sharply defined and the strategies aligned with these definitions, the mental associations to the brand are created over time and as a result, the brand connects. In other words, strategies must be coherent with the definitions of the brand platform in order to build a brand perception that creates loyalty and a community around its values.⁷¹

The company defines and manages the brand from the **top** (step 1) – **down** (step 10) and the consumer experiences the brand from the **bottom** (step 10) – **up** (step 1). A top-down and a bottom-up model co-exist in the building of a brand (Figure 6). When

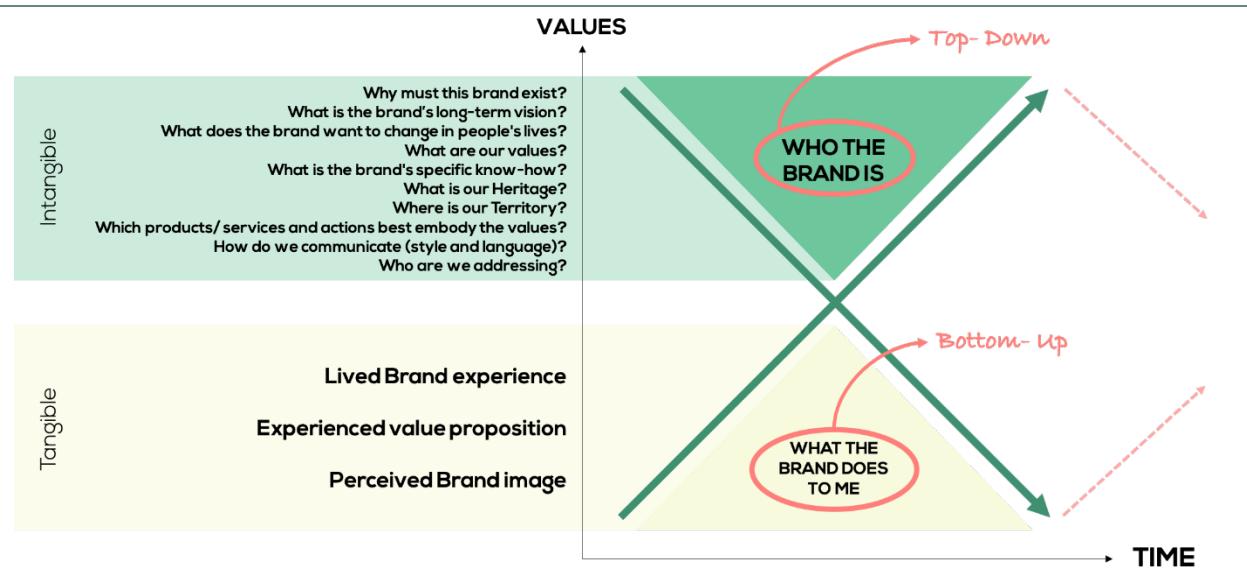
⁶⁹ Kapferer, *The New Strategic Brand Management*, 173.

⁷⁰ Kapferer, 175.

⁷¹ Kapferer; Insch, "Branding the City as an Attractive Place to Live."

Nike was launched, the brand was "a name on an innovative shoe" the brand was created by the perception of the product. The quality of the product transformed the name Nike in a conception of trust, status and respect.⁷² In this example, Nike used a bottom-up model that answered through functional performance the question: what the brand does to me? As it happened with Nike and ING with time, the values of the brand determine the products, services and processes of the organisation.⁷³ Building a brand requires a constant oscillation between a top-down and a bottom-up model.

Figure 6: Two brand models to build a brand



Source: own illustration adapted from Jean-Noël Kapferer.

Brand platforms are constantly evolving to adapt and respond to the changes in the community. What rarely changes are the core values of the brand, they give coherence through time and create the legacy of the brand, they represent the meanings and associations in the consumer's mind. Apple, one of the most well-known cases of a strong brand, was saved from going to bankruptcy by Steve Jobs based on the core values of the brand. As said by Jobs in an internal speech in 1997:

The market is a totally different place than it was a decade ago and Apple is totally different... But values and core values, those things shouldn't change. The things that Apple believed in at its core are the same things that Apple really stands for today... Our customers want to know who is Apple

⁷² Kapferer, 58.

⁷³ Ibid.

and what is it that we stand for? Where do we fit in this world? And what we are about isn't making boxes for people to get their jobs done, although we do that well... But Apple's about something more than that.⁷⁴

Jobs returned in 1997 to Apple after 12 years of being away; the computer market was almost commodified with a low-profit margin. The company had announced early that year that it had lost \$708 million in the first three months. One quarter after the execution of the 'think different' campaign, based on the core values of the brand, Apple made a \$45 million profit. Although cost-cutting and price -increasing strategies were also implemented, the strongest advantage was a brand that represented a lifestyle and status. As documented by Deutschman:

The greatest asset that Apple still had was a strong brand, an image that connoted creativity and nonconformity. Instead of hoping for some stunning technical breakthrough that would save the company, Jobs looked instead at improving Apple's advertising and restoring its cool, hip image.⁷⁵

Brands have a cohesive power

Throughout this chapter, we have traced the evolution of brands and described how brands have adapted to differentiate and generate value. Being first conceived as names and logos, it is now commonly accepted that brands evoke emotions, generate identity, and play a significant role in shaping global culture. The power of a brand relies on the power to influence actions, this power is gained through consistent strategies that build the brand system. Every strategy should be defined by a brand platform that is customer-oriented and clearly states, among other things, the consumers' insights, the role of the brand to overcome social tensions and the brand's core values.

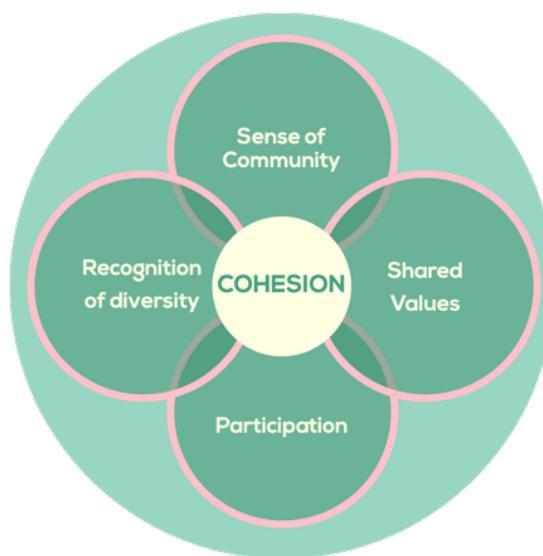
Brands have the power to mobilise inside and outside the organisation by generating pride and empowering. When companies are managed 'by the brand', the organisational structure and the internal processes are designed to deliver the brand experience. When the organisation is 'on brand' the experience enables the creation of relationships between the brand, the products or services, the company's employees and other customers; with time these interactions generate emotional bonds that form communities. Simply put, **coherent brand systems** unite people from different geographies around a shared identity and a lifestyle represented by the values of the brand. These brand communities share rituals, traditions and codes of behaviour.

⁷⁴ "A Lesson In 'Core Values' From Steve Jobs," *A For Adventure* (blog), 2016, <http://www.aforadventure.com/blog/2016/2/2/a-lesson-in-core-values-from-steve-jobs>.

⁷⁵ Alan Deutschman, *The Second Coming of Steve Jobs* (Crown, 2001), 222.

Kornberger argued that "brand communities provide a new form of social cohesion,"⁷⁶ our social cohesion generators and this chapter support this claim. Throughout this chapter we saw how brands create systems of mental associations that built a collective identity, generate a sense of belonging in a community and promote the participation of the consumers around the brand assets. Brands enable the four generators of social cohesion previously identified (figure 7).

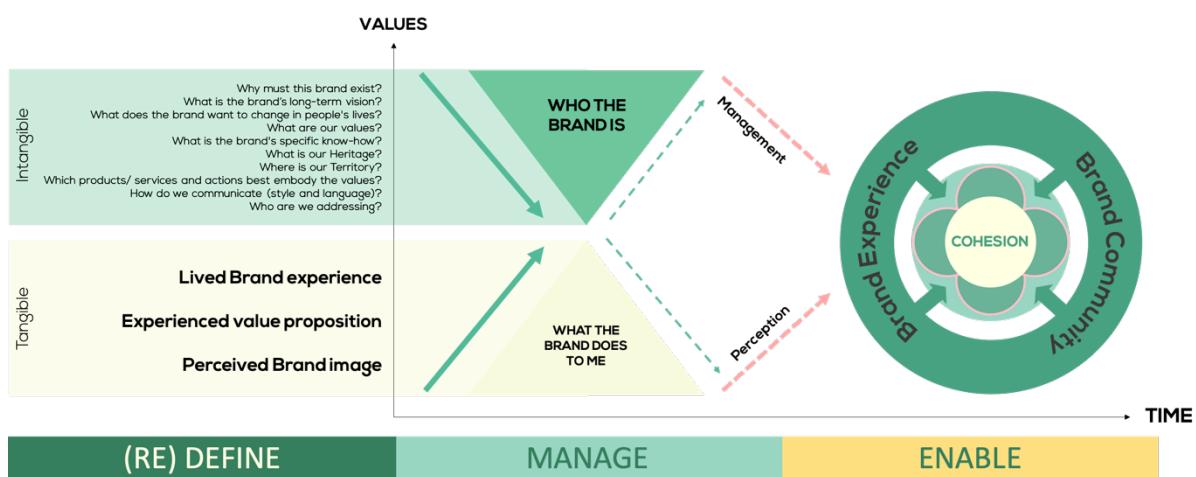
Figure 7: Brands generators of social cohesion



Brands have a cohesive power; they create multicultural relationships around their values that generate a sense of community and promote interaction. **The Cohesive Power of brands is obtained (re)defining the brand platform, managing 'by the brand,' and enabling relationships among the stakeholders within the brand experience. Constant and coherent brand strategies generate a cohesive community over time** (Figure 8)

⁷⁶ Kornberger, *Brand Society*, 270.

Figure 8: Cohesive power model



According to Kapferer what makes a 'name' a 'brand' is the power to influence, this power he argues is acquired through all the elements of the brand experience.⁷⁷ Taking into account the historical journey of this chapter and adding to Kapferer's thirteen definitions, brands are defined by me as **a name that has the power to influence and create cohesion within different cultures**. This power relies on the mental associations generated by the brand image; the social relationships within the brand experience; and the value proposition of the organisation guided by the ten definitions of the brand platform.

It has been widely recognised that cities act as brands; a summary of values and benefits that enables the city to compete in the financial investment market, the tourism market, for high-skill professionals and so on.⁷⁸ City brand studies claim that like business brands, the brand of the city creates mental maps, associations and attachment and can generate a sense of belonging and community.⁷⁹

Brand communities integrate people from different cultures and different identities, in this sense multicultural cities could learn from their methods. Diverse societies could use the cohesive power of brands and expand the impact of the branding strategy. To understand how cities can use the **Cohesive Power** of brands, the next chapter will explore the history of city brands and draw a parallel with the evolution of business brands.

⁷⁷ Kapferer, 9.

⁷⁸ Kapferer, 2.

⁷⁹ Lewis Holloway and Phil Hubbard, *People and Place*, 1 edition (Harlow: Pearson education, 2000), 49; Simon Manyiwa, Constantinos Vasilios Priporas, and Xuan Lorna Wang, "Influence of Perceived City Brand Image on Emotional Attachment to the City," *Journal of Place Management and Development* 11, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 68; Pedeliento and Kavaratzis, "Bridging the Gap between Culture, Identity and Image."



3: Branding cities

Urban areas must be held together by a consciousness that unites their people in a shared identity.

Joel Kotkin

The use of brandings methods for the development of cities is often attacked as an unsustainable practice or praised as a strategy to create bonding and meaning. The recent critical reading of Bonakdar and Audirac (2019) argued that gentrification was a consequence of the policies promoted by place branders.⁸⁰ While Lucarelli (2018) recognised "city branding as a powerful broadband instrument of urban policy with implications for many different policy areas spanning from education and business to tourism and social inclusion."⁸¹ With a similar perspective, Belabas and Eshuis (2019) suggested that as in London, New York and Amsterdam, city branding could be a strategy to define a new shared sense of belonging that bonds residents, and creates an inclusive social vision in superdiverse cities like Rotterdam. Can city brands develop a cohesive power? To move forward on our research, this chapter will explore which corporate branding strategies can city branding use to contribute to social cohesion and how can these be implemented, by drawing a parallel with the previous history of business brands.

3.1 From the name of the city to brand governance

Cities have always been "places worthy of proper names and prominent labelling." Such names enabled cities to be recognised and to "create meaning for individuals and groups".⁸² As an academic field of study, city branding materialised two decades ago, not surprisingly some authors argue that city branding theory is still on an emergent phase.⁸³

⁸⁰ Bonakdar and Audirac, "City Branding and the Link to Urban Planning: Theories, Practices, and Challenges," 1.

⁸¹ Andrea Lucarelli, "Place Branding as Urban Policy: The (Im)Political Place Branding," *Cities, City Marketing and Branding as Urban Policy*, 80 (October 1, 2018): 14.

⁸² Yi-Fu Tuan, "Place: An Experiential Perspective," *Geographical Review* 65, no. 2 (1975): 153-57.

⁸³ Michalis Kavaratzis, "From City Marketing to City Branding: Towards a Theoretical Framework for Developing City Brands," *Place Branding*; *Houndsill's* 1, no. 1 (2004): 58-73; Andrea Lucarelli and Per Olof Berg, "City Branding: A State-of-the-art Review of the Research Domain," *Journal of Place Management and Development* 4, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 9-27. Oguztimur and U. Akturan, "Synthesis of City Branding Literature (1988-2014) as a Research Domain," *International Journal of Tourism Research* 18, no. 4 (2016): 357-72; Ahmadreza Shirvani Dastgerdi and Giuseppe Deluca, "Boosting City Image for Creation of a Certain City Brand," 2019.

The dominating disciplines conducting research are urban studies, tourism, marketing, city planning and geography. City brands however, can be traced back earlier in time.

Byblos, Tyre and Sidon were some of the Phoenician Cities "run by mercantile interests whose primary concern was expanding trade."⁸⁴ These first commercial capitals of 800 B.C -as coined by Kotkin- needed to build a good reputation to expand their trade. In the place marketing literature, Ashworth and Voogd described how in the 8th century, Leif Ericson was promoting Greenland to attract new settlers by projecting a favourable place image.⁸⁵ Ward evidenced how the British cities of the nineteenth century invested in libraries, concert halls, art galleries and museums to showcase "the success of industrial civilisation."⁸⁶ As the character of the Sinclair Lewis novel tells to the 'city boosters' of Zenith:

Culture has become as necessary adornment and an advertisement for a city to-day as pavements or bank-clearances...it gives such class advertising as a town can get in no other way; and the guy who is so short-sighted as to crab the orchestra proposition is passing up the chance to impress the glorious name of Zenith on some big New York millionaire that might—that might establish a branch factory here! (Lewis, 1922, pp.252–253)⁸⁷

These early city brands were names of cities that symbolised quality, origin and power. The 1970s are recognised in the literature as the moment when western cities deliberately applied business methods to sell themselves and create new jobs.⁸⁸

Selling, marketing and branding the city

During the 70s, local governments adopted entrepreneurial ways of management to recover from the crisis caused by deindustrialisation, inflation, the oil embargo, declining public expenditure, and a falling tax base. A neoliberal, free market ideology emerged and a market-based competition between cities and regions intensified.

The often mentioned example is the advertisement campaign of "I Love New York" in 1977 that boosted the local economy and helped the city recover from the fiscal crisis. After six years of promotion the city was able to recover and pay its debts. The

⁸⁴ Joel Kotkin, *The City: A Global History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005), 15.

⁸⁵ Ashworth and Voogd (1994) Quoted in Kavaratzis, "From City Marketing to City Branding," 2008, 151.

⁸⁶ Stephen Ward, *Selling Places: The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities 1850–2000* (London : New York, NY: Routledge, 1998), 1.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Ward, 4.

⁸⁸ Mihalis Kavaratzis, "City Branding," in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Urban and Regional Studies* (American Cancer Society, 2019), 1.

promotional strategy attracted different middle managers, companies and tourist to the city. Broadway and the city's museums were used to position an image of culture. Celebrities promoted all-night entertainment and shopping while family outdoor recreations were sold with different landscapes of the New York State.⁸⁹

Through the 1980s other western cities with reduced resources and in need of jobs increased the use of promotional campaigns to attract private companies, investment and tourists.⁹⁰ The financial revolution caused by new management models and liberalisation of markets created a hierarchic urban network that intensified the competition.⁹¹ The term 'city marketing' came into fashion to describe all the promotional activities made by city developers.

As a research domain, city marketing gained attention with Ashworth and Voogd (1988), who applied business marketing methods to develop city marketing scientifically. The complex functioning of cities required, according to the authors, a 'scientific' marketing approach able to enhance urban planning and management. The advertainment campaigns and promotional activities were enriched through three marketing developments: non-profit, social and image marketing. New methods increased the political relevance of city brands while city marketing became a new paradigm to structure the city.⁹² Ashworth and Voogd called for the use of "marketing approaches by public planning agencies not just as an additional instrument for the solution of intractable planning problems but, increasingly, as a philosophy of place management."⁹³

The 1990s was the decade when marketing became instrumental to urban management, three main causes can be found in the literature:

1. The *Tourist Gaze*, published by Urry in the 1990s developed the idea that the main activity of tourists was to 'gaze at signs', as a result, cities increasingly transformed spaces and advertised landscapes to building the visual experience of the city.⁹⁴
2. A scientific approach: publications aiming to apply business, management and marketing methods to cities grew during these decades, as described by Ward. As

⁸⁹ Miriam Greenberg, *Branding New York: How a City in Crisis Was Sold to the World* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Peggy R. Bendel, "Branding New York City – The Saga of 'I Love New York,'" in *City Branding: Theory and Cases*, ed. Keith Dinnie (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), 179–83.

⁹⁰ G. J. Ashworth and H. Voogd, "Marketing the City: Concepts, Processes and Dutch Applications," *The Town Planning Review* 59, no. 1 (1988): 66.

⁹¹ John Friedmann, "The World City Hypothesis," *Development and Change* 17, no. 1 (1986): 69–83; Saskia Sassen, "A New Urban Regime?," in *The Global City*, New York, London, Tokyo (Princeton University Press, 1991), 323–38.

⁹² Ashworth and Voogd, "Marketing the City."

⁹³ Quoted in Kavaratzis, "From City Marketing to City Branding," 2004, 59.

⁹⁴ John Urry quoted in Gert-Jan Hospers, "City Branding and the Tourist Gaze," in *City Branding: Theory and Cases*, ed. Keith Dinnie (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), 27.

evidenced by Barke: "between 1990 and 1994, five major books were published (Ashworth and Voogd 1990; Kearns and Philo 1993; Kotler et al. 1993; Gold and Ward 1994; Smyth 1994)."⁹⁵ Kearns and Philo focused on how different meanings are consumed and produced; Ashworth and Voogd, along with Kotler and his co-authors, applied and adapted the concept of the marketing mix (Place design, infrastructure, basic services and attractions). Gold and Ward discussed the importance of the image to promote the city; and Smyth discussed the role of flagship developments and the importance of establishing a shared vision.

3. Cultural festivals and hallmark events grew not only to entertain tourists but also as *Urban Propaganda Projects*, as termed by Boyle (1997). Urban propaganda considered events held by city governors "to legitimate [the] new accumulation strategies."⁹⁶ Jakob later echoed Boyle:

when city governments hold fewer and fewer regulatory instruments and resources to influence housing, employment, education and the welfare of their citizens, experience planning in the form of festivals not only hides these weaknesses but also becomes a sort of propaganda (Jakob 2013).⁹⁷

Smith (2015), also considered 'festivalisation' as a tool to gain "political and economic capital for civic elites and to deter resistance to their control."⁹⁸ The case of Berlin after the fall of the wall is often given as an example of cities where festivals are regarded as important urban showcases by the local government.⁹⁹

As the competition of cities became intensified and their population transformed, urban governance became more complex as well as the management of the city marketing. Critical studies stressed the need for long term strategies able to deal with multiple identities and participatory governance. Before finalising the decade Van den Berg and Braun (1999) argued that complex urban systems needed "organising capacity," to achieve "an integral vision of urban development, the ability to develop strategic networks and leadership."¹⁰⁰ The authors proposed a framework to manage the city brand: *Landscape Strategies* and *Infrastructure Projects* strengthened the image and were actively communicated through marketing actions; the other two, *Organisational*

⁹⁵ Michael Barke, "City Marketing as a Planning Tool," in *Applied Geography: Principles and Practice*, ed. Michael Pacione (London: Routledge, 1999), 486.

⁹⁶ M Boyle, "Civic Boosterism in the Politics of Local Economic Development—'Institutional Positions'; and 'Strategic Orientations' in the Consumption of Hallmark Events," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 29, no. 11 (1997).

⁹⁷ As quoted in Andrew Smith, *Events in the City: Using Public Spaces as Event Venues* (Routledge, 2015), 35.

⁹⁸ Smith, *Events in the City*.

⁹⁹ Irina Van Aalst and Rianne van Melik, "City Festivals and Urban Development: Does Place Matter?," *European Urban and Regional Studies*, February 14, 2012.

¹⁰⁰ Leo van den Berg and Erik Braun, "Urban Competitiveness, Marketing and the Need for Organising Capacity," *Urban Studies* 36, no. 5–6 (May 1, 1999): 998.

Structure, considered the participation of public, private institutions and citizens in making decisions; and the *City's Behaviour* included the vision, strategy, incentives and sales objectives of the city.

New York is regarded as an early example of the marketing-led urban governance, as evidenced by Greenberg. I love New York was a political strategy that not only used promotional techniques to increase tourism and investment. But it also included a restructuration of fiscal policies. "Changes in laws, tax codes, bureaucratic arrangements, budgetary priorities, and urban development plans in order to make New York more business friendly." Such as lowering personal income tax and a goal to eliminate the "onerous" welfare benefits. In addition, all marketing activities were controlled by a single agency in order to make government-business relations simple and efficient.¹⁰¹

The Creative City of Landry and Bianchini (1995) gained traction in 2002 with *The rise of the creative class* of Florida that intensified the competition of cities. Attempting to lure the newly identified high-income consumers cities transformed spaces, developed events, and participated in city awards through cooperation between public and private institutions. Vocational training was also considered to make the local community "suitable" for specific target industries. City brands were now being positioned as places of tolerance and creativity, with quality of life, vibrant start-up scenes and cultural entertainment.¹⁰²

The applications of different marketing methods changed the urban management and increased the relevance and the complexity of city brands. The concept of city branding emerged in the literature as a result. Greenberg traced in 2000 the emergence of the 'branded cities' through the representation of cities as consumption spaces. In 2002, Mommaas was highlighting the social aspect of brands:

Brands enable us to more easily 'read' each other and our environment of places and products. In this respect branding is not simply an economic activity, inspired by market considerations. In a deeper, cultural sociology sense, it is above all a manner of introducing order and certainty into what is in principle a chaotic reality. Seen in this way, brands are not purely a source

¹⁰¹ Greenberg, *Branding New York*, 200.

¹⁰² Charles Landry and Franco Bianchini, *The Creative City*, vol. no. 12., Paper / Demos (Demos, 1995); Richard L. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (Basic Books, 2002); Mihalis Kavaratzis and Gregory Ashworth, "Place Marketing: How Did We Get Here and Where Are We Going?," *Journal of Place Management and Development* 1, no. 2 (January 1, 2008): 150–65.

of differentiation but also of identification, continuity and collectivity"
(Mommaas 2002:34).¹⁰³

The article *From city marketing to city Branding* published in 2004, draws a theoretical framework to develop the city brands, based on the business brand theory of corporate branding. Kavaratzis argued that as a corporate brand, the city brand required complex management of vision, culture and image, to answer the demands of different stakeholders. The goal was to meet "the needs of existing local businesses and residents while presenting an appealing external image."¹⁰⁴ Expanding on this framework, Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) introduced the concepts of brand identity, brand positioning and brand image.¹⁰⁵ After introducing these three concepts of city branding, the authors referred to the characteristics of the approach as the "broad range of marketing interventions."¹⁰⁶ Which exemplifies the conceptual confusion identified by Boisen et al. between promotion, marketing and branding in the literature.¹⁰⁷

Increased competition stressed the need of cities to "differentiate themselves and to convey why they [were] relevant and valued options."¹⁰⁸ Trueman et al. (2004) acknowledge the need for long term strategies in order to achieve consistency in messages to stakeholders. The brand index of Anholt launched in 2006 measured the presence, place, potential, pulse, people and prerequisites of the city.¹⁰⁹ The index evidenced the importance of an integral brand management with a long term vision. With a marketing perspective, Braun echoed this claim in 2008:

[E]mbedding city marketing in urban governance and creating the right conditions for city marketing management will become key challenges for cities that want to make the most of their marketing efforts in the coming years. (Braun, 2008, p. 193).¹¹⁰

After recognising that in practice both public and private stakeholders were involved in the process of the creation of the brand Braun (2012) reconsidered his assumption. City branding, he observed, was a "subject of political decision-making that could not be

¹⁰³ Quoted in Kavaratzis, "From City Marketing to City Branding," 2008, 11.

¹⁰⁴ Kavaratzis and Ashworth, "Place Marketing."

¹⁰⁵ Mihalis Kavaratzis and G. J. Ashworth, "City Branding: An Effective Assertion of Identity or a Transitory Marketing Trick?," *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 96, no. 5 (2005): 506–14.

¹⁰⁶ Kavaratzis and Ashworth, "Place Marketing," 160.

¹⁰⁷ Martin Boisen et al., "Reframing Place Promotion, Place Marketing, and Place Branding – Moving beyond Conceptual Confusion," *Cities, City Marketing and Branding as Urban Policy*, 80 (October 1, 2018): 4–11.

¹⁰⁸ Oguztimur and Akturan, "Synthesis of City Branding Literature (1988–2014) as a Research Domain," 358.

¹⁰⁹ Kavaratzis, "From City Marketing to City Branding," 2008, 133.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Erik Braun, "Putting City Branding into Practice," *Journal of Brand Management; London* 19, no. 4 (2012): 259.

isolated from politics nor from administrative procedures.”¹¹¹ He was now arguing for a branding governance.

The management of city brands became relevant during the 2010s with the development of research and studies, in turn, city brands started to catch up with the evolution of business brands. The books *Towards Effective Place Brand Management: Branding European Cities and Regions* edited by Gregory Ashworth, Mihalis Kavaratzis (2010) and *City Branding: Theory and Cases* edited by Keith Dinnie (2011) converged multidisciplinary approaches and case studies aiming for theoretical integration. Both books often mention brand perception, brand identity, residents satisfaction, brand personality, city essence, visual identification, co-creation processes, stakeholders, culture, and strategical plans.¹¹²

Similar to the history of business brands, brand equity was introduced to measure the city brand success. Zenker and Martin (2011) considered the monetary value of the tourist to the city, they called this the brand centricity perspective.¹¹³ The customer value perspective was considered by Insch and Florek (2010) who introduced residents satisfaction and showed a connection with the feeling of residents belonging to the place, i.e. place attachment.¹¹⁴ The article *Putting City Branding Into Practice* by Braun (2012) highlighted as crucial that city branding would be seen as urban governance, that is how and by whom city policies are produced, decided and implemented.¹¹⁵

Residents gained relevance in the city branding literature in the following years. Insch (2011) highlighted the importance of branding places to live and guarantee residents brand loyalty.¹¹⁶ Merrilees et al. (2012) evidenced that multiple stakeholders have multiple brand meaning and stressed the need for stakeholder management.¹¹⁷ Zenker and Seigis (2012) argued that residents satisfaction was increased with introducing residents participation in place marketing processes.¹¹⁸ While Kemp et al. (2012) showed how in

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Gregory Ashworth and Mihalis Kavaratzis, *Towards Effective Place Brand Management: Branding European Cities and Regions* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2010); Dinnie, *City Branding: Theory and Cases*.

¹¹³ Sebastian Zenker and Nicole Martin, “Measuring Success in Place Marketing and Branding,” *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy: London* 7, no. 1 (February 2011): 32–41.

¹¹⁴ Andrea Insch and Magdalena Florek, “Place Satisfaction of City Residents: Findings and Implications for City Branding,” in *Towards Effective Place Brand Management: Branding European Cities and Regions* (UK: Edward Elgar, 2010).

¹¹⁵ Braun, “Putting City Branding into Practice.”

¹¹⁶ Andrea Insch, “Branding the City as an Attractive Place to Live,” in *City Branding: Theory and Cases*, ed. Keith Dinnie (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), 8–14.

¹¹⁷ Bill Merrilees, Dale Miller, and Carmel Herington, “Multiple Stakeholders and Multiple City Brand Meanings,” *European Journal of Marketing* 46, no. 7/8 (2012): 1032–47.

¹¹⁸ Sebastian Zenker and Adrian Seigis, “Respect and the City: The Mediating Role of Respect in Citizen Participation,” *Journal of Place Management and Development* 5, no. 1.

Austin, Texas residents felt the brand was aligned with the conceptions of themselves, which created a connection and a civic consciousness.¹¹⁹ Kavaratzis (2012) questioned the ownership of the brand and laid the foundations for a participatory view of place branding.

Residents, as identified by Braun, Kavaratzis, and Zenker (2013) play three significant roles in the branding of the city: as an **integral** part of the brand through their behaviours and culture, as **ambassadors** that communicate and give credibility, and as **owners** of the city brand (taxpayers and voters).¹²⁰

As it happened in the history of business brands, the increased relevance of residents translated into a higher relevance of city branding for the city and is slowly transforming the management. City brands are evolving from image builder to guides of urban development. In words of Eshuis and Klijn (2017), "cities all over the world have introduced marketing-led urban governance strategies, including advanced branding strategies. These cities align their policies and urban development with the brand in order to strengthen their brand."¹²¹ During the past three years, city branding scholars have been joining forces to develop the theoretical foundations of the discipline.¹²² Three of the points raised are:

- **Cities must live by the brand:** Branding is something that goes underneath the city image; It is related to people, purpose and reputation.¹²³ Pedeliento and Kavaratzis (2019), similar to the case of ING, recognised the need to reduce the gap between the culture, the identity and the image of the brand. "[Cities must first] enable and facilitate the enactment of relevant practices within the place and only afterwards attempt to brand these to others."¹²⁴ In other words, the city must "live" the value brands before positioning them in the market.
- **Brands empower residents:** Vanolo (2017) questions the right to produce the imaginaries of power constructed and reproduced through city branding. He calls for a 'right to the brand' that echoes Lefebvrian 'right to the city'. The idea of a "right to the brand deals with the potential empowerment of inhabitants and city users in relation to brand development."¹²⁵ Brands, as relational social constructions, are co-developed and

¹¹⁹ Elyria Kemp and Carla Childers, "Place Branding: Creating Self-Brand Connections and Brand Advocacy," n.d.

¹²⁰ Braun, Kavaratzis, and Zenker, "My City - My Brand."

¹²¹ Jasper Eshuis and Erik-Hans Klijn, "City Branding as a Governance Strategy," in *The SAGE Handbook of New Urban Studies* (55 City Road: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2017), 92.

¹²² cf. Sebastian Zenker, "Editorial: City Marketing and Branding as Urban Policy," *Cities, City Marketing and Branding as Urban Policy*, 80 (October 1, 2018): 1-3, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2018.06.001>; Mihalis Karavatzis et al., *Inclusive Place Branding: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315620350>.

¹²³ Anholt, "Some Important Distinctions in Place Branding."

¹²⁴ Pedeliento and Kavaratzis, "Bridging the Gap between Culture, Identity and Image," 358.

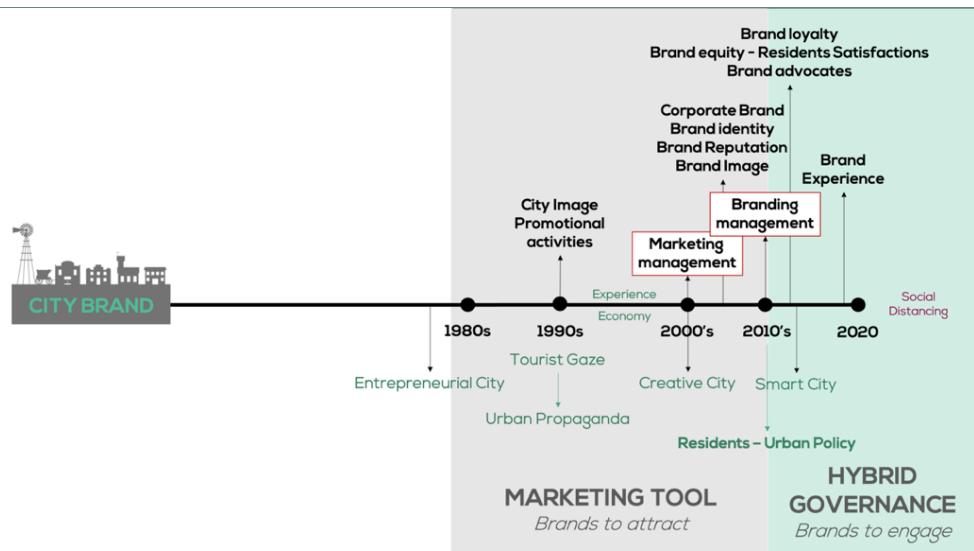
¹²⁵ Alberto Vanolo, *City Branding The Ghostly Politics of Representation in Globalising Cities* (Routledge, 2017), 199.

co-owned and therefore can establish a dialogue within the society. Co-creation process could allow the voices of "other subjects" to be heard and co-produce meaning.

- **Brands are vehicles to foster inclusion:** Leicester, one of Britain's most diverse city is using city branding to develop "sustainable communities, where diversity is cherished as a unique asset and people of all communities feel at home." As described by Hassen and Giovanardi (2018) diversity, as a brand value, recognises that the multicultural heritage enriched the city.¹²⁶

The application of new methods and the integration of disciplinary views has transformed and increased the complexity of city brands. The evolution of business brands can be described in two stages: starting from when city brands were a marketing tool to attract, and transforming into brands as enablers of participatory practices and tools of urban governance that include different stakeholders to build a reputation (figure 9).

Figure 9: evolution of city brands through business branding

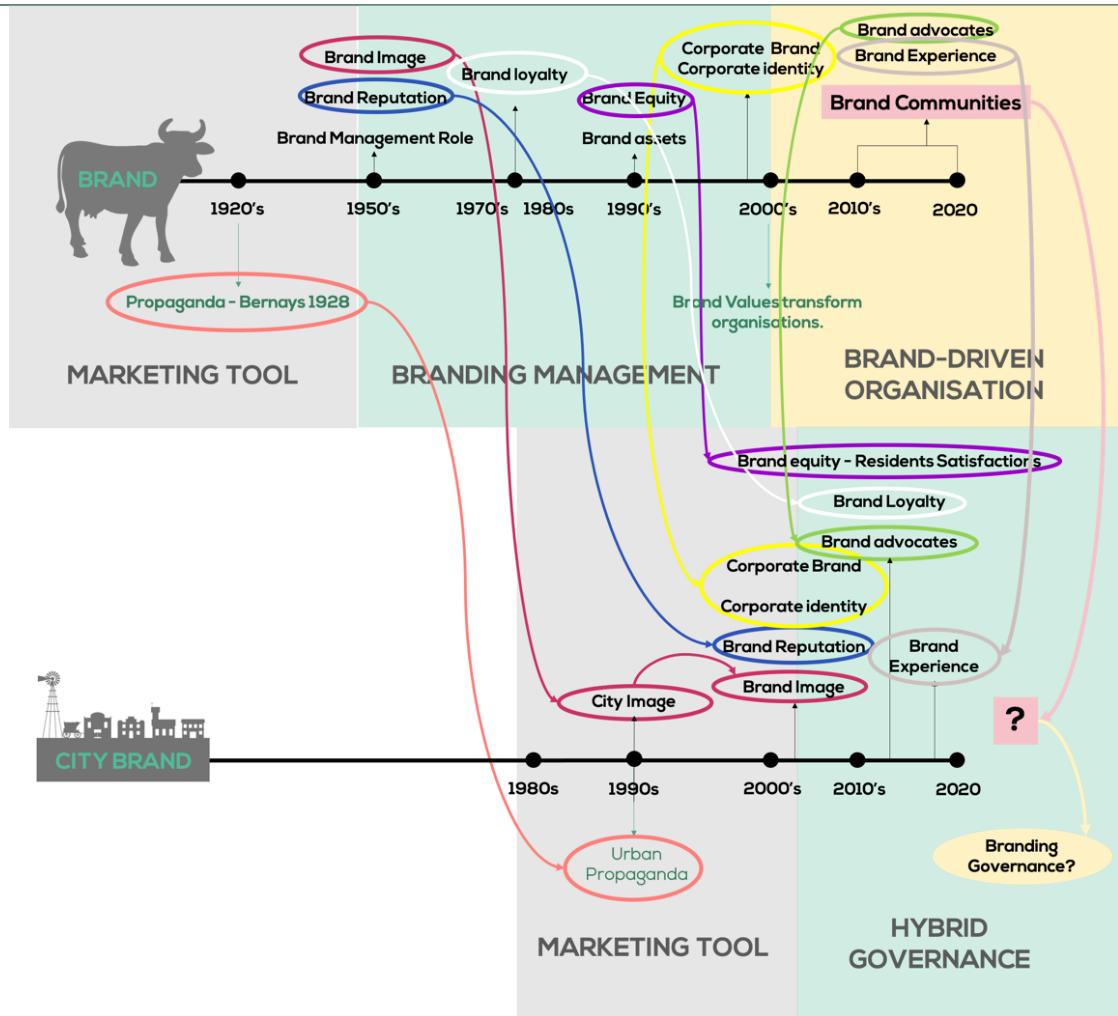


When drawing a parallel between both evolutions, as in figure 10, city brands seem to have caught up in 30 years the 100 years of history of business brands. The application of different brand theories and branding methods, along with the convergence of different disciplines has resulted in an accelerated evolution of the city brands. **The concept of brand communities and a lack of brand driven governance seem to be the only missing developments.**

¹²⁶ Inès Hassen and Massimo Giovanardi, "The Difference of 'Being Diverse': City Branding and Multiculturalism in the 'Leicester Model,'" *Cities, City Marketing and Branding as Urban Policy*, 80 (October 1, 2018): 45–52.

As described in chapter 2, when companies are managed 'by the brand' the brand experience is 'on brand' and enables the creation of relationships between the brand, the products or services, the company's employees and other customers; with time these interactions generate emotional bonds that form communities. Likewise, the city must be governed by the brand in order for the city brand experience to be 'on brand' and enable the creation of relationships between the city, the city brand, and other stakeholders.

Figure 10: historical parallel of business and city brands



The **cohesive power** of brands, as previously exemplified, is directly connected to the ability of brands to influence relationships among the stakeholders within a brand experience that creates a sense of community. This power is obtained over time by managing in coherence with the brand platform that consistently brings to life the brand experience through all contact points, as illustrated in the **cohesive power model**. Since the developments of city brands seems to be bridging the gap with business brands, cities

may be able to recalibrate their strategies to social cohesion. To find out how this can be made we first need to make a brief journey to understand city branding as an integral part of urban governance and how cities use and create brands. In other words, we will review the state of the three stages of the cohesive power model.

Stakeholders participation enables governance networks

The creation of a city brand has political and social consequences, the latest conversations in the literature serve as evidence. The last decade of our historical journey shows that cities are acknowledging the importance of delivering a consistent brand experience. Participatory branding practices are empowering residents. And inclusion seems to be enabled by participatory branding practices.

Although the research is relatively recent, the idea was introduced by David Harvey in 1989. The selling of the entrepreneurial city' required the creation of an attractive "urban imaginary."¹²⁷ In our terms, he was referring to the creation of an attractive city brand image. The city brand, he anticipated, could help reduce the sense of alienation produced by the modern city. Baltimore "renaissance city" served to claim that the co-creation of a city brand could generate a sense of belonging to the city:

If everyone, from punks and rap artists to the 'yuppies' and the haute bourgeoisie can participate in the production of an urban image through their production of social space, then all can at least feel some sense of belonging to that place. The orchestrated production of an urban image can, if successful, also help create a sense of social solidarity, civic pride and loyalty to place and even allow the urban image to provide a mental refuge in a world that capital treats as more and more place-less.¹²⁸

This article along with *The Urban Experience*, published by Harvey in the same year, can be considered seminal works for two of the recent conversations in the city branding literature:

1. the power of city brands to create a common identity and a sense of belonging, and
2. the production of city brands as a participatory way of governance.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71, no. 1 (1989): 3–17.

¹²⁸ Harvey, 14.

¹²⁹ cf. Kavaratzis, "From City Marketing to City Branding," 2008; Alberto Vanolo, *City Branding The Ghostly Politics of Representation in Globalising Cities* (Routledge, 2017).

Harvey also anticipated that if such urban imaginary was not co-created, then financial capitalism could take control of the society.

Urban entrepreneurialism here meshes with a search for local identity and, as such, opens up a range of mechanisms for social control.¹³⁰

Thirty years after Harvey's article, city branding practices have benefited business elites, leading to socially divisive outcomes by contributing to gentrification and social inequality.¹³¹ Bonakdar and Audirac (2019) argued that participatory approaches were adopted by city branders as means "to attain 'buy-in' from locals in order to promote place brand strategies...branders' efforts are seemingly designed to attract external audiences (e.g., investors, visitors, creatives), without acknowledging larger social concerns".¹³² The critical review stresses the need to create a link between city branding with urban planning. Evidencing that both practices affect residents and share similar challenges; such as, "oversimplification of power relationships, sidestepping social inclusion, trivializing tokenism, and disregarding the commodification of culture and gentrification."¹³³ Bonakdar and Audirac also acknowledged that the new participatory approach of city branding seemed to prioritise civic participation and inclusion. This acknowledgement was shared by Kavaratzis (2018):

Research on city branding has started to invest in rethinking the somewhat nebulous concept (Boisen et al. 2018) and fragmented theory of place branding (Lucarelli and Berg 2011) to direct attention to socially just practice. Acknowledging that slogans, logos, and top-down branding campaigns do not deliver the expected outcomes, city branding practice has turned to public participation and urban planning to craft durable and "authentic" place brand strategies.

Things seem to be also changing in practice. A survey conducted in the Netherlands by Eshuis, Klijn, and Braun (2014) evidenced that among 600 people involved in place marketing 27% rarely or never conduct market research among their residents. Of the total 600, only 15% agreed that residents had had a significant influence on the content of city marketing. Despite this low number of residents involvement, the research evidenced how with participatory branding the feelings of residents are considered in governance processes. Using the branding of Katendrecht, South Rotterdam, as a case study they

¹³⁰ Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism," 14.

¹³¹ cf. Andrea Insch, "Auckland, New Zealand's Super City," *Cities, City Marketing and Branding as Urban Policy*, 80 (October 1, 2018): 38–44; Can-Seng Ooi, "Paradoxes of City Branding and Societal Changes," in *City Branding: Theory and Cases*, ed. Keith Dinnie (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), 54–61.

¹³² Bonakdar and Audirac, "City Branding and the Link to Urban Planning: Theories, Practices, and Challenges," 8.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 9.

evidenced how the branding campaign helped reduce the feelings of anxiety and fear regarding the upcoming urban revitalisation, while preserving the community's identity. The interactive sessions allowed the city officials to understand and acknowledge the emotions of the community.¹³⁴

Participatory branding practices are being used as strategies to foster interactions within networks of public and non-public actors, open spaces where different voices can be heard and enable synergies among actors of the city. City branding is transforming in a "relationship-builder for place development, where critical issues, internal divisions and multiplicity are addressed."¹³⁵ Including diverse stakeholders in the creation of the brand strategy is essential to gain democratic legitimacy of city branding as a means to improve the life of residents and the local communities.¹³⁶ As evidenced by Eshuis and Klijn (2012) city branding is used to achieve three governance functions:

1. **Influence perception** by providing specific images about policy problems and solutions.

The city branding of Barcelona after 40 years of repression during Franco's dictatorship, presented by Beloso (2011) exposes how images and associations were used to enable a process of radical transformations of the city. With a new vision and strong leadership, the city branding was used to influence the perception of residents.

Barcelona started a new era full of ambition and hope and with the desire to move on from one of the greyest periods of its history. 1979, the year in which the first democratic elections in Spain took place, marked the beginning of the global redesign of Barcelona, with two main objectives: to improve the quality of life of its citizens and to put the city on the map in terms of global awareness.¹³⁷

2. **Secure cooperation of multiple actors** in complex governance processes. City brands can help bind actors around core ideas and values, and foster participation.

3. **Communicate with residents and other stakeholders** inside and outside the city.

Brands can facilitate government communication and adapt the message to different stakeholders through multiple channels. For example, brands can use mass media to communicate through "relatively simple images and associations, large policy documents or in-depth statements".¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Jasper Eshuis, Erik-Hans Klijn, and Erik Braun, "Place Marketing and Citizen Participation: Branding as Strategy to Address the Emotional Dimension of Policy Making?," *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 80, no. 1 (March 1, 2014): 151-71.

¹³⁵ Eva Maria Jernsand, Helena Kraff, and Helena Kraff, "Democracy in Participatory Place Branding: A Critical Approach," *Inclusive Place Branding* (Routledge, November 22, 2017).

¹³⁶ Karavatzis et al., *Inclusive Place Branding*.

¹³⁷ Juan Carlos Beloso, "The City Branding of Barcelona: A Success Story," in *City Branding: Theory and Cases*, ed. Keith Dinnie (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), 120.

¹³⁸ Eshuis and Klijn, "City Branding as a Governance Strategy."

Similar to the case of Nike and ING, city brands are used to influence stakeholders perceptions and to define what services, actions and alliances are aligned with the brand values. The city brand from this perspective, is a guideline of urban governance.

A branding governance requires a structural transformation of the city

Prosperity for the urban community is often defined as the ultimate goal of city marketing. An honest promotion of prosperity, however, must go beyond factors as income and employment and include the quality of the urban environment, with an eye for the living conditions of all groups, including the underprivileged.¹³⁹ City branding becomes a relevant tool to achieve this purpose.

One of the reasons why city branders in the Netherlands and Germany avoid participatory processes is that conflicts among stakeholders can increase.¹⁴⁰ The same study made by Braun, Eshuis, Klijn, Zenker (2018) showed that co-created branding strategies that lower the gap between the brand identity and the brand image can reduce tensions between stakeholders. Two determinant aspects can explain the seemingly contradictory findings for the success of city branding as a new type of urban governance:

1. **Coherent city brand experience** or as referred by Lucarelli, political stability is crucial for branding success. As it happened between the employees and companies after the crisis, disengagement and cynical attitudes of residents towards the city brand are related to the disapproval of local government actions. An example is the case of branding Dunedin presented by Insch and Stuart (2015), residents reactions were related with a "lack of awareness of the brand, misalignment between [residents'] place brand attributes and those promoted by the local City Council and their resentment of the focus on external audiences."¹⁴¹

Similar to the history of business brands, city brands have also proved to be an efficient strategy to mobilise and inspire residents and other stakeholders, bringing pride both inside and outside. The branding strategy for Stockholm with sustainability as a core value serves as evidence.¹⁴² Sustainability is shared, 'lived and enabled' by residents, other stakeholders and the local governance.

Delivering a brand experience consistent throughout the different stakeholders and touchpoints in the city is complex. The city branding of Munich is an example of this.

¹³⁹ van den Berg and Braun, "Urban Competitiveness, Marketing and the Need for Organising Capacity," 992.

¹⁴⁰ Erik Braun et al., "Improving Place Reputation: Do an Open Place Brand Process and an Identity-Image Match Pay Off?," *Cities* 80 (October 2018): 22-28.

¹⁴¹ Andrea Insch and Menique Stuart, "Understanding Resident City Brand Disengagement," *Journal of Place Management and Development* 8 (November 9, 2015): 24.

¹⁴² Pedeliento and Kavaratzis, "Bridging the Gap between Culture, Identity and Image."

Munich is colourful was the co-created branding strategy of the city during the so-called refugee crisis. Personal experiences and extremist communications in the media generated frictions and co-destructed the brand.¹⁴³

The increased relevance of social media is widely discussed in the city branding literature. The Strategic Metropolitan Plan of Barcelona (PEMB) considers the media as the fifth ally of the "quintuple helix" that helps them develop the city.¹⁴⁴ Together with public administration, academia, business and citizens organisations, PEMB believes that a strong, independent, critical media strengthens democracy. Media for the city and its citizens informs, entertains and can even help to generate cohesion within a territory.¹⁴⁵ In line with this, the city branding of Barcelona should consider the media as an important stakeholder for the brand. As evidenced by Juan Carlos Belloso the city branding of Barcelona was developed in the 1990s, as an integral part of the strategical plan of the Olympic games.¹⁴⁶ However, with time the brand followed the same path as other brands in the literature, it developed in the communication areas of the municipality -separated from the strategical plan. During the interviews, the disconnection with the future vision of the city was identified as one cause why the residents nowadays see the brand as an image-building strategy.¹⁴⁷ The brand manager of Barcelona city brand and PEMB are now looking to (re)-integrate the strategies.

2. Establishing and maintaining the city brand requires alignment of the multiple actors as co-producers of the brand. Successful branding requires the **management of a political structure of interests**.¹⁴⁸ As put by Eshuis and Klijn, "Governance has developed in such a way that charming, engaging, and appealing to multiple parties has become highly important. Branding is therefore used to enthuse, activate, and bind stakeholders."¹⁴⁹ Brands reintroduce values into the governance of cities and enable the interaction of different stakeholders through participation and openness. They enable interactions

¹⁴³ cf. Christine Vallaster, Sylvia von Wallpach, and Sebastian Zenker, "The Interplay between Urban Policies and Grassroots City Brand Co-Creation and Co-Destruction during the Refugee Crisis: Insights from the City Brand Munich (Germany)," *Cities, City Marketing and Branding as Urban Policy*, 80 (October 1, 2018).

¹⁴⁴ cf. Elias G. Carayannis and David F. J. Campbell, "Triple Helix, Quadruple Helix and Quintuple Helix and How Do Knowledge, Innovation and the Environment Relate To Each Other? : A Proposed Framework for a Trans-Disciplinary Analysis of Sustainable Development and Social Ecology," *International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development (IJSESD)* 1, no. 1 (2010): 41–69; Igor Calzada, "From Smart Cities to Experimental Cities?," in *Co-Designing Economies in Transition: Radical Approaches in Dialogue with Contemplative Social Sciences*, ed. Vincenzo Mario Bruno Giorgino and Zack Walsh (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 191–217; Kiki Sudiana et al., "The Development and Validation of the Penta Helix Construct," *Business: Theory and Practice* 21, no. 1 (March 6, 2020): 136–45.

¹⁴⁵ PEMB, "El cuarto poder, la quintuple hélice."

¹⁴⁶ Belloso, "The City Branding of Barcelona."

¹⁴⁷ cf. Barcelona City Council, "Cities against Gentrification"; Arturo Pérez, "La última campaña contra el turismo en Barcelona: «No cuentes a nadie que has estado»," *ABC*, July 31, 2019.

¹⁴⁸ Lucarelli, "Place Branding as Urban Policy."

¹⁴⁹ Eshuis and Klijn, "City Branding as a Governance Strategy."

that can transform into stronger bonds and networks, this resembles the binding of brand communities.

Co-creation processes of city branding and marketing strategies can threaten the development of the city and as a consequence, of the city brand. In 2018 Insch and Walters expanded the research of Dunedin and identified protective behaviours as a result of the attachment of the residents to the place. The branding strategies were rejected by residents for the possibility of bringing new groups to the city. In Dunedin, having a sense of belonging to the place transformed in feelings of rejection of new communities.¹⁵⁰ This case could be considered an example of the city branding paradox created by the bottom-up and top-down tension presented by Ooi (2011).

The feelings of threat towards diversity shown by the residents of Dunedin, serves in some way, to illustrate a similar risk evidenced in the literature of social cohesion. As concluded by Kearns and Forrest (2010):

A city can consist of socially cohesive but increasingly divided neighbourhoods. The stronger the ties which bind local communities, the greater may be the social, racial or religious conflict between them. The point is that social cohesion at the neighbourhood level is by no means unambiguously a good thing. It can be about discrimination and exclusion and about a majority imposing its will or value system on a minority. A city of neighbourhoods with a high degree of social cohesion could be a city with a high level of conflict within and between neighbourhoods. Similarly, a nation of highly cohesive cities with strong and distinct images could be one in which shared values and norms are relatively parochial and with wide intercity inequalities of lifestyles and living standards. Thus, the need for a simultaneous, multilevel perspective on social cohesion.¹⁵¹

The last quote of this paragraph highlighting the need for a multilevel perspective on social cohesion gives relevance to the use of city brands to strive toward a cohesive community. Brands can impact and influence multiple levels inside and outside the organisation and inside and outside the city.¹⁵² As argued by Clegg and Kornberger (2010):

Today, perhaps, in the new market environment of competition between nations and cities, new imagined communities might form around brands –

¹⁵⁰ Andrea Insch and Trudie Walters, "Challenging Assumptions about Residents' Engagement with Place Branding," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*; London 14, no. 3 (August 2018): 152–62.

¹⁵¹ Ade Kearns and Ray Forrest, "Social Cohesion and Multilevel Urban Governance," *Urban Studies* 37, no. 5/6 (2000): 1013.

¹⁵² cf. Lin Ye and Emma Björner, "Linking City Branding to Multi-Level Urban Governance in Chinese Mega-Cities: A Case Study of Guangzhou," *Cities, City Marketing and Branding as Urban Policy*, 80 (October 1, 2018): 29–37.

for better or worse, they might become new meaning systems around which we organize ourselves as a public.¹⁵³

Neighbourhood attachment is different from the feeling of belonging to the city and the community. After an extensive review of the place attachment research, Lewicka (2011) evidenced that neighbourhood attachment has attracted the attention of place researchers on a higher extent than other places (75% of the research), because of personal reasons of the researchers or the heritage of the field. Cities, she argued, as places of clearly delineated borders are the perfect exemplification of 'centres of meaning, and "are stable and continuous through time."¹⁵⁴ City branding as a multi-level form of urban governance creates an umbrella brand that includes different meanings for multiple stakeholders in multiple neighbourhoods.¹⁵⁵ In doing so, city brands can generate belonging and attachment to the city as a whole.

Up to now, we have discussed on a broad scale the most relevant historical changes of city brands and branding. By tracing these changes, we discovered that the power of city brands grew to influence urban governance around values and is transforming the 'management' of the city. Comparing the evolution of both business and city brands, allowed us to discover that to connect residents and communities, city brands need to deliver a consistent brand experience through a brand driven governance. How could cities enable this? **What can city branding learn from business branding to contribute to social cohesion?** The second part of this chapter will answer this question.

3.2 Brand coherence connects residents

The evolution of city branding has transformed city brands from the names of a city to a co-production of meaning between the 'quintuple helix'. Branding strategies are cross sectoral and multilevel strategies that involve research, private capital, and public expenditure of civil society.¹⁵⁶ Academics, Business, Government, Community and Media, are an integral part in the construction of the city (brand), this could be the result of a deliberate brand strategy, but it is often a natural process. Although city brands are more

¹⁵³ Stewart R. Clegg and Martin Kornberger, "An Organizational Perspective on Space and Place Branding," in *International Place Branding Yearbook 2010: Place Branding in the New Age of Innovation*, ed. Frank M. Go and Robert Govers (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010), 11.

¹⁵⁴ Maria Lewicka, "Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 31, no. 3 (September 1, 2011): 212, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.10.001>.

¹⁵⁵ Merrilees, Miller, and Herington, "Multiple Stakeholders and Multiple City Brand Meanings."

¹⁵⁶ Igor Calzada, "Transforming Smart Cities with Social Innovation: Penta Helix Multi-Stakeholders Framework," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, March 13, 2017).

complex than business brands, a consistent brand experience seems to develop the same binding power in both types of brand.¹⁵⁷ Throughout the two stages of evolution, city brand management has amplified its focus. City brands to attract focused on creating and managing a **brand image**. City brands to engage focused on enabling the participation of different stakeholders to define inclusive **values** and brand stories/concepts. City branders are beginning to acknowledge the importance of living by the brand and delivering a **consistent brand experience**, to all different stakeholders through all touchpoints.

City brands are complex holographic systems

The cohesive power of a brand, as described in chapter 2, is developed through consistent and coherent management of the brand system. City brands as a whole are built like a hologram. The city brand is the result of the interactions between the brand image, the multiple brand value propositions, and the brand experience, which in turn are interdependent and interconnected aspects. As in business brands, city branding academics and practitioners have developed different models and methods to manage the three brand aspects. The marketing or branding literature has inspired some of these models; they focus primarily on enabling the management of the city brand image.¹⁵⁸ Other models converge multidisciplinary methods and allow for a more integral focus on delivering relevant value proposition for different stakeholders.¹⁵⁹ Recent multidisciplinary models aim to deliver a consistent brand experience by closing the gap between the reality and the city brand through branding governance.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Christine Vallaster, Sylvia von Wallpach, and Sebastian Zenker, "The Interplay between Urban Policies and Grassroots City Brand Co-Creation and Co-Destruction during the Refugee Crisis: Insights from the City Brand Munich (Germany)," *Cities, City Marketing and Branding as Urban Policy*, 80 (October 1, 2018).

¹⁵⁸ cf. Kavaratzis, "From City Marketing to City Branding," 2008; M. Florek and K. Janiszewska, "Defining Place Brand Identity: Methods and Determinants of Application," *Actual Problems of Economics* 150, no. 12 (2013): 543–53.

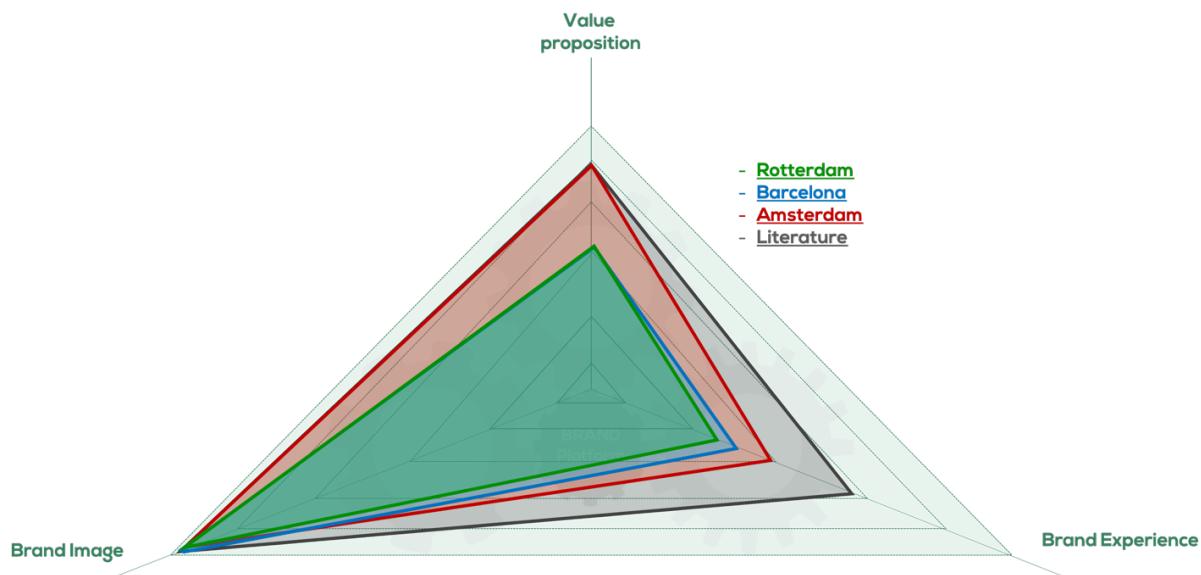
¹⁵⁹ cf. Insch, "Branding the City as an Attractive Place to Live"; Bayraktar Ahmet and Uslay Can, *Strategic Place Branding Methodologies and Theory for Tourist Attraction* (IGI Global, 2016); Rinske Brand, "The Case of Hulst: Co-Creating a Future-Proof Place Brand," in *Co-Creating Brands: Brand Management from A Co-Creative Perspective*, by Nicholas Ind and Holger J. Schmidt (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 263–74.

¹⁶⁰ cf. Simon Anholt, "A Political Perspective on Place Branding," in *International Place Branding Yearbook 2010: Place Branding in the New Age of Innovation*, ed. Frank M. Go and Robert Govers (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010), 12–20; Ari-Veikko Anttiroiko, *The Political Economy of City Branding* (Routledge, 2014); Graham Hankinson, "Relational Network Brands: Towards a Conceptual Model of Place Brands," *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, August 1, 2016; Sebastian Zenker and Erik Braun, "Questioning a 'One Size Fits All' City Brand: Developing a Branded House Strategy for Place Brand Management," *Journal of Place Management and Development* 10, no. 3 (January 1, 2017): 270–87; Braun et al., "Improving Place Reputation"; Pedeliento and Kavaratzis, "Bridging the Gap between Culture, Identity and Image."

City branding is a path dependent process affected by multiple stakeholders in a collective and individual matter.¹⁶¹ Every city brand evolves differently, even when created at the same time or/ in the same country, as was the case of DHL and Nike. The evolution of a city brand depends on multiple reasons such as, how the city is governed, what is the position in the global market, where is the city located, what landscapes does it have, how is the entrepreneurial scene, how many languages and cultures does it have, what are the beliefs of its society, how do residents perceive the brand, and even what do people eat.¹⁶²

The city brand systems of Amsterdam, Barcelona, Rotterdam and the cases mentioned in the historical journey of this chapter are illustrated in figure 11. The positions are based on interviews with the city branding professionals of the three cities. With this in mind, the results must be considered illustrative and not conclusive.

Figure 11: City brands as whole systems



- Brand image: Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Rotterdam city brands are defined with the *DNA model/ matrix*.
- Brand concept and value proposition: Amsterdam uses the *Unique selling point (USP)*. Barcelona defines *Value proposition Statements*. And Rotterdam the 'How, What, Why' model. Amsterdam is the only one of the three cities that has defined value propositions for all different stakeholders including residents, which according to the respondent, are central in the strategy.

¹⁶¹ cf. Braun, "Putting City Branding into Practice."

¹⁶² cf. Dinnie, *City Branding: Theory and Cases*.

"Our place branding model is about DNA, USPs and icon. We make the brand by building a reputation and making a story. And for storytelling, you need icons to inform all your target groups about the city and the brands. We have USPs for all target groups: for companies, residents and for our visitors. And within the USPs we look for evidence for the USP. For example, we have the USP cultural heritage for our visitors and then I have a number of items: Museums, districts etc. The brand is the philosophy. We build a brand from DNA to USP to icon and then we can build and use content stories." (Amsterdam&partners)

Barcelona defined the new branding strategy two years ago in a co-created process that treated residents as targets. The political situation, however, delayed the execution of the brand strategy which in turn, made the city officials define the international market as the focus of the branding. Rotterdam's new city branding strategy -approved during this research- is focused on reaching *international frontrunners*.

- Brand experience: in line to what was evidenced in the literature, the respondents recognised the complexity of the branding process. The three brands are managed through public and private partnerships. Amsterdam as already mentioned, considers the experience of multiple stakeholders including residents. Which could explain the apparent success of the digital network, integrated by more than 100 actors. Despite acknowledging the importance of residents, Barcelona and Rotterdam still use the brand as an external strategy to attract investment, talent and tourism. The network of brand partners of Barcelona is four times larger than the network of brand partners of Rotterdam. This advantage comes in part as a result of the political structure that the city had since the 90s when it started to develop with 'participatory' strategical plans.

A coherent brand holographic system is the 'social glue' of the city

Branding governance requires that city branders oversee the brand system and orchestrate the network of stakeholders' processes, relationships, definitions, and associations. Coherence between the three aspects is obtained in business brands through brand platforms, as described in chapter 2. These "normative blueprints" are able to integrate and guide the different process and models of the three aspects of the brand system.

In the city branding research, the methods found are used to either build and manage the brand image, the value proposition, and/or the brand experience. A model that works as a central axis and defines 'the platform' from which all other actions develop

-including the guidance of the urban governance- was not found. In addition, almost all the models found are still using 'the brand essence' to define the city brand. As described in chapter 2, the brand essence forces the definition of the brand to catchy words that are often vague and redundant static concepts unable to engage and mobilise different stakeholders. Frimann and Stigel also evidenced the uselessness of the 'brand essence' in city brands:

Our study has demonstrated that the values of both Aalborg and Hjørring were formulated in general, abstract and vague language with little concretisation of any specific or unique values. The values might apply to almost any other city or town in Denmark. The attempts at formulating the essence of what characterises Aalborg and Hjørring present a major problem in the analysed materials in that nothing noteworthy is being said.¹⁶³

After a critical analysis of *The Brand Identity Prism*, *Brand DNA*, *Brand Code* and *Bull's eye Platform*, Florek and Janiszewska concluded that for the city branding of Poznan the most adequate and useful management method was the Bull's eye platform. In their words, "The bull's eye method allows a comprehensive definition, identification and arrangement of the elements in the context of all entities within a metropolis."¹⁶⁴ The work of Florek and Janiszewska proves two points:

1. **There is conceptual confusion in the field.** This echoes the work of Boisen et al. that evidenced the confusion of the meaning of marketing, branding and promotion in the literature. Florek and Janiszewska compared methods that are used for different aspects of the brand system. As parts of a holographic system, "approximations of the whole [city brand] are stored into each aspect."¹⁶⁵
2. **The brand platform enables coherent and efficient management of the brand system.**

To integrate and guide the decisions of the three brand aspects, city brands could adapt and use of *the ten steps towards a platform that creates communities* described in chapter 2.

¹⁶³ Søren Frimann and Jørgen Stigel, "City Branding: All Smoke, No Fire?," ed. Ulla Carlsson, *Nordicom Review Special Issue: 17th Nordic Conference on Media and Communication Research, Aalborg, 11-14 August 2005*, 2006, 263.

¹⁶⁴ Florek and Janiszewska, "Defining Place Brand Identity," 552.

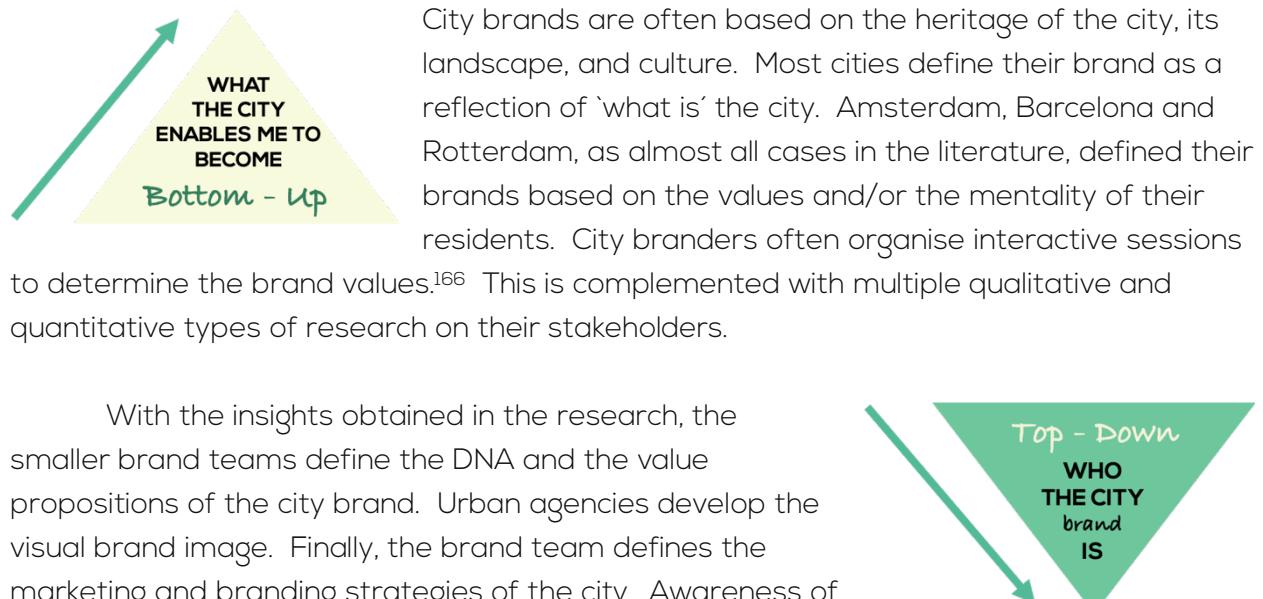
¹⁶⁵ Eric Trist, Hugh Murray, and Frederick Edmund Emery, *The Social Engagement of Social Science, Volume 2: A Tavistock Anthology--The Socio-Technical Perspective* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 359.

Table 4: Ten steps to define a city brand that generates cohesion

Top-down Brand management	
Step 1	Why must this city brand exist?
Step 2	What is the city's long-term vision?
Step 3	What does the city want to change in people's lives?
Step 4	What are the values of the city?
Step 5	What is the city's specific know-how?
Step 6	What is the city's Heritage?
Step 7	Where is city's brand territory?
Step 8	Which products/ services, actions and behaviours best embody the values?
Step 9	How does the city communicate (style and language)?
Step 10	Who is the city addressing? What image does the city brand render of themselves?

Answering these ten questions (table 4) defines the brand platform that will guide the decisions of the city and the interactions of the different stakeholders to ultimately inspire relationships within the society. It is important to clarify that, as explained in chapter 2, the brand platform does not replace the other methods or models used within the different brand aspects, rather it becomes the foundation of the city brand. The brand city platform is the central axis that keeps the coherence of the **holographic city brand system**.

Building city brands requires a constant oscillation between a top-down and a bottom-up model. The city brand is perceived and **created** from the **bottom** (step 10) - **up** (step 1). And it is defined and managed from the **top** (step 1) - **down** (step 10).



City brands are often based on the heritage of the city, its landscape, and culture. Most cities define their brand as a reflection of 'what is' the city. Amsterdam, Barcelona and Rotterdam, as almost all cases in the literature, defined their brands based on the values and/or the mentality of their residents. City branders often organise interactive sessions to determine the brand values.¹⁶⁶ This is complemented with multiple qualitative and quantitative types of research on their stakeholders.

With the insights obtained in the research, the smaller brand teams define the DNA and the value propositions of the city brand. Urban agencies develop the visual brand image. Finally, the brand team defines the marketing and branding strategies of the city. Awareness of

¹⁶⁶ Eshuis, Klijn, and Braun, "Place Marketing and Citizen Participation," 163.

the brand, positioning of the values and engagement of the targets are obtained by activating different networks and executing multiple strategies.

City branding, as previously mentioned, has been criticised for creating fake city images and identities that do not represent the residents of the city. As said by Insch, "in the race to build a brand that is admired by tourists and other short-term visitors, residents are overlooked, despite their role as loyal supporters and ambassadors of the city brand."¹⁶⁷ In terms of Vanolo, cities have ghostly voices and ghostly presences such as old identities, old buildings, old stigmas, and old stories. For him, city brands are partial truths:

The selective narrations at the basis of city branding—emphasising, stereotyping and labelling certain aspects of local identities, while obliterating other elements and the voices of 'other' subjects—is ultimately political and violent, potentially causing spatial conflicts.¹⁶⁸

The metaphor of the hologram serves us to makes sense of this critiques. As previously described contrary to what is highly claimed, city branding is not a top-down process. City brands are created oscillating between top-down and bottom-up definition. **The often grounded criticism toward city branding can be explained by the creation of an incomplete city brand hologram.** Holographic images are created by lasers which scatter beams of light so that information relating to the whole complete image is contained in each and every single part.¹⁶⁹ 'Walking around' a hologram creates an unexpected number of multidimensional images. **The 'whole city brand' is not built out of parts, but into parts.**

The recent participatory practices are transforming city branding in a form of "politics of visibility and representation".¹⁷⁰ Allowing the participation of multiple stakeholders in the branding process allows for a broader representation of the city brand.¹⁷¹ As evidenced in the participatory branding of Bogotá, city brands are able to "work with the many open-ended trajectories and 'celebrate' their diversity, allowing for their interaction through participation and openness."¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ Insch, "Branding the City as an Attractive Place to Live," 9.

¹⁶⁸ Alberto Vanolo, *City Branding. The Ghostly Politics of Representation in Globalising Cities* [Routledge, 2017] [Chapter 1], 22, accessed March 31, 2020..

¹⁶⁹ Raymond A. Serway and John W. Jewett, *Principles of Physics: A Calculus-Based Text, Volume 2* (Cengage Learning, 2012), 929.

¹⁷⁰ Vanolo, *City Branding The Ghostly Politics of Representation in Globalising Cities*.

¹⁷¹ cf. Pedeliento and Kavaratzis, "Bridging the Gap between Culture, Identity and Image."

¹⁷² Mihalis Kavaratzis and Ares Kalandides, "Rethinking the Place Brand: The Interactive Formation of Place Brands and the Role of Participatory Place Branding," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 47, no. 6 (June 1, 2015): 1379.

A holographic system perspective virtually validates the use of city brands for social cohesion. The bottom-up creation of the brand has reflected only a few identities. Echoing the 'right to the brand', city brands could establish a dialogue that enables the co-creation of meaning for all stakeholders, including the weaker voices. The more voices reflected in the definitions of the brand, the more complete the 'whole brand' hologram becomes. The power of the city brand holographic system relies on the "capability of giving form to representations, ideas, perceptions, discourses and emotions that ultimately shape people's lives and people's understanding of urban life."¹⁷³

Participatory practices allow the construction a more complete 'whole brand'. The ultimate value of a city brand is Capax Universi: capable of grasping the totality of existing things.¹⁷⁴

Cohesive brands are society-centric

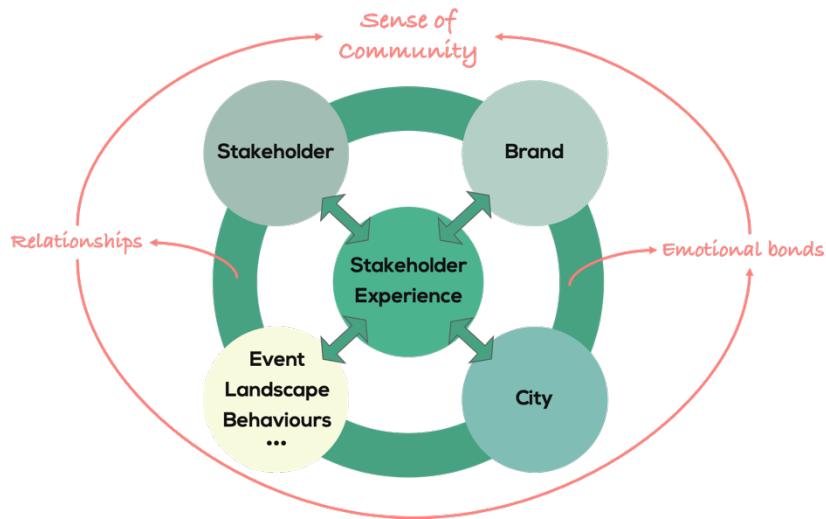
So far, we have traced the evolution of brands and identified gaps with the evolution of business brands. The parallel between the business and the city brand holographic systems allowed us to evidence the need to better develop the city brand experience. As evidenced in chapter 2, brand communities are created when the interactions within the brand experience evolve into emotional bonds. To develop the cohesive power, city brands need to enable consistent and coherent multiple brand experiences.

Cities, like brands, are lived in the context of social, economic and political relationships that influence feelings of belonging to the city and the city brand society. City brands could adapt the Customer-Centric Model of Brand Community to consider the relationships that stakeholders develop within the city brand experience (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Brand societies from a stakeholder perspective

¹⁷³ Vanolo, *City Branding The Ghostly Politics of Representation in Globalising Cities*, 21.

¹⁷⁴ Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* (Ignatius Press, 2015), 39.



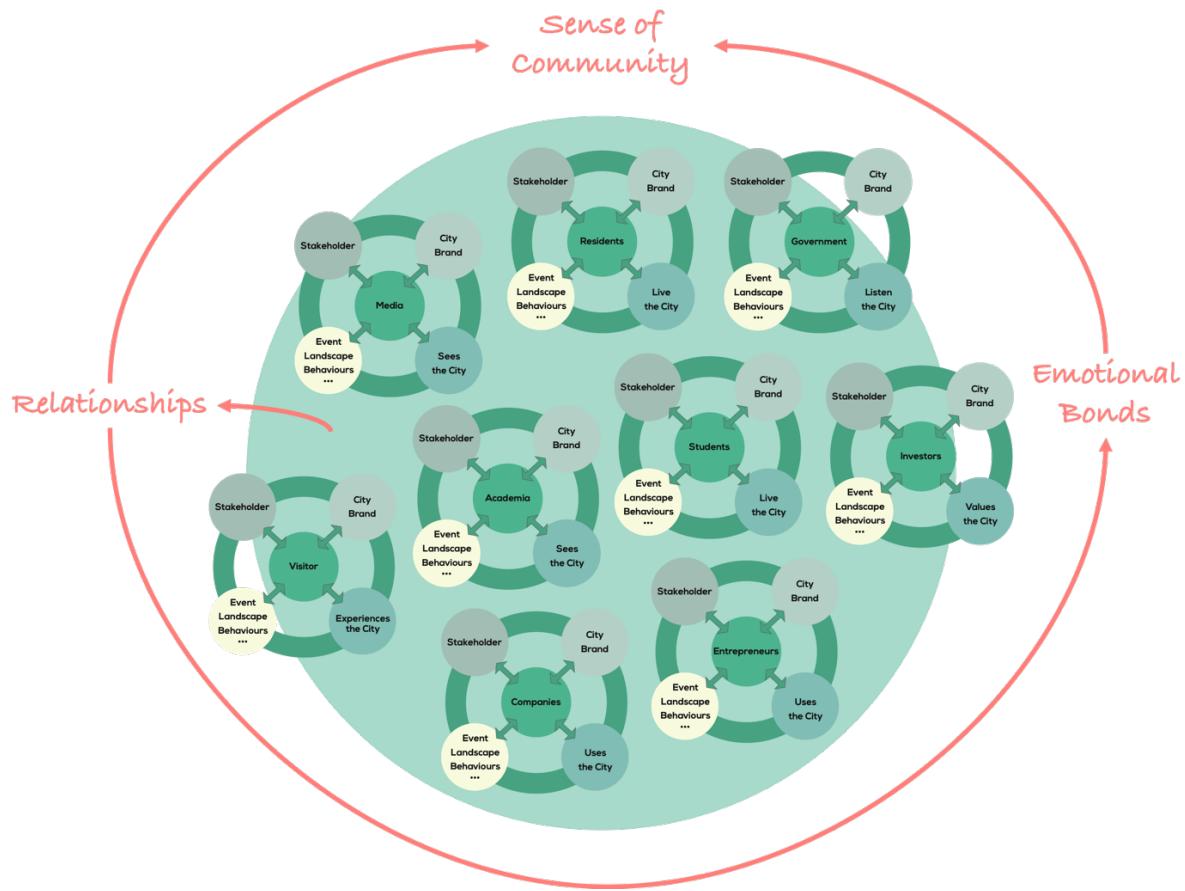
Considering the theory of brand communities, I take the perspective that brand societies are Stakeholder-Centric. Within a more complex web of relationships, cohesive brand societies are developed. The existence of the brand society is the result of the meaningfulness of the stakeholder experience. Against this background, the creation of an inclusive and co-produced city brand meaning is essential. As concluded by Pedeliento and Kavaratzis:

[The city] branding strategy must be pursued with the involvement of internal stakeholders by letting them take part in definition of the strategic objectives to fulfil, and by making them aware that fulfilment of these objectives is largely owed to their practices.¹⁷⁵

The cohesive power of a city brand comes into being through coherent branding strategies. **When cities are governed 'by the brand' policies are designed to deliver the brand experience.** Multiple brand experiences contribute to the creation of the 'whole city brand. If the city brand is embedded in the stakeholders' experience and matches their identities, people embrace the brand and feel empowered by it. **When the city is 'on brand' the experience enables the creation of relationships between the city, the brand, the landscapes, other stakeholders, and all that is in the city** (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Brand society model from an inclusive perspective

¹⁷⁵ Pedeliento and Kavaratzis, "Bridging the Gap between Culture, Identity and Image."



Inclusive brand societies are able to include multiple stakeholders and multiple identities and enable their interaction. This echoes Maalouf thoughts on identity:

Each individual's identity is made up of a number of elements and these are clearly not restricted to the particulars set down in official records. Of course, for the great majority these factors include allegiance to a religious tradition; to a nationality – sometimes two; to a profession, an institution, or a particular social milieu. But the list is much longer than that; it is virtually unlimited. [...] Not all these allegiances are equally strong, at least at any given moment. But none is entirely insignificant, either. All are components of personality – we might almost call them "genes of the soul" so long as we remember that most of them are not innate.¹⁷⁶

Throughout this chapter, we saw how city brands have been evolving to create systems of mental associations that built a collective identity, generate place attachment and enable participatory governance. City brands have been catching up to the evolution of business

¹⁷⁶ Amin Maalouf, *On Identity* (Random House, 2011), 1.

brand and could recalibrate their strategies to contribute to strengthening the four generators of social cohesion: a sense of community, shared values, participation in society and recognition of diversity,

City Brands can develop a cohesive power; they can contribute to the creation of multicultural relationships around their values, that generates a sense of community through interactions. **The Cohesive Power of city brands is obtained (re)defining the brand platform, governing 'by the brand,' and enabling relationships among the stakeholders within the brand experience. Constant and coherent branding governance generates a cohesive community over time.**



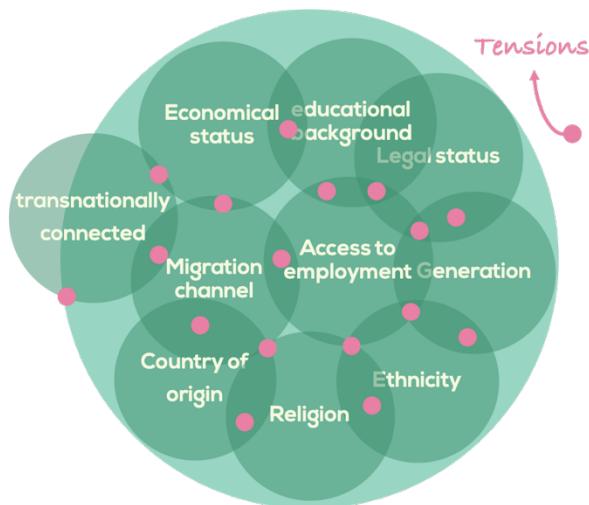
4: Branding Rotterdam

The more complex a society becomes, the more fully the law must take into account the diversity of the people who live in it.

Margaret Mead

The port city of Rotterdam is not a happy superdiverse society.¹⁷⁷ Superdiversity is multidimensional and complex (figure 14). The seminal work of Vertovec (2007) argues that diversity should consider a range of other variables, in addition to ethnicity. The 'diverse nature' of a society is the result of the interactions of variables such as country of origin, ethnicity, language, immigration status, age, gender, education, occupation and locality.¹⁷⁸ Rotterdam, as evidenced by Scholten, Crul, and Van de Laar (2019), is a superdiverse society with no clear majorities or minorities and marked by a growing social tension since the 1980s.¹⁷⁹

Figure 14: Superdiverse society



Like many port cities of Europe, after the crisis of the 70s and 80s, Rotterdam re-discovered the importance of the inner city and the potentialities of increasing the number of creative industries to develop alternative economic growth models, which are less port-

¹⁷⁷ Scholten, Crul, and van de Laar, *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity*.

¹⁷⁸ Vertovec, "Super-Diversity and Its Implications."

¹⁷⁹ Scholten, Crul, and van de Laar, *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity*.

related.¹⁸⁰ However, there was a growing paradox. To recover from the crisis, the city needed to look to different futures. The port was no longer generating enough jobs, especially for the lower classes. On the other hand, in order to become an active player in the European urban competition, it had to develop new city-bound industries and services. Floating on the waves of new trends in urban developments and cultural challenges, Rotterdam tried to re-image itself. Following the model of New York, the city implemented marketing policies to (re) brand Rotterdam as a cultural city. Observing the initiatives the city experimented on, the results show how the difficulties Rotterdam faced in handling the aforementioned paradoxes. The implemented strategies often have part of autonomous process of gentrification contributing to increase social frictions and showing that the city was unable to tell a convincing narrative. Its image as a working, migration and port city based on hard values, did not match with the soft values embracing creatives. As evidenced by Van Den Berg (2012), La City was a festival created to replace the 'rough' men who worked in the harbour.

The myth of Rotterdam as a 'daring city' used to be told in the context of the masculine, 'blue-collar/working-class city' and harbour. Now, precisely this myth of 'tradition-breaking' is invoked to embrace on the one hand masculine entrepreneurial strategies and on the other the city's feminine side, middle-class families and a 'pink-collar economy'.¹⁸¹

Nowadays, Rotterdam is sold as an attractive residential and cultural city, that embraced leisure, but unlike New York or Amsterdam, the city is struggling with ongoing friction between local deprived native and migrant groups.¹⁸² Against this background, Rotterdam's city branding is an interesting case study to draw general conclusions and recommendations on how city brands can become generators of cohesion. This chapter will answer how Rotterdam's branding has evolved? And which lessons are to be learnt from the best branding strategies?

4.1 From Rotter-dam to city brand

Rotterdam was the name given to the settlement that developed around 1270 with the construction of the **dam** in the **Rotte** river that 400 years later became the second city of the Dutch Republic. The merchant city benefited from transnational trading relations and

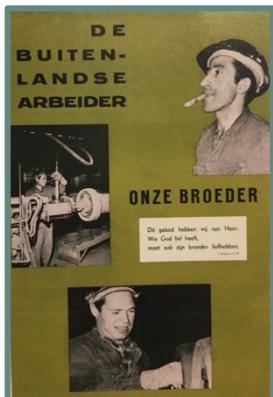
¹⁸⁰ Paul van de Laar, "Modernism in European Reconstruction-Policy and Its Public Perception: The Image of Rebuilding Rotterdam, 1945 - 2000," ed. Georg Wagner-Kyora, *The American Historical Review*, Reconstructions, Modernity and the Local Politics of Identity Construction since 1945, 119, no. 4 (2013): 202-31.

¹⁸¹ Marguerite Van Den Berg, *Femininity As a City Marketing Strategy: Gender Bending Rotterdam*, 2012, 165.

¹⁸² Scholten, Crul, and van de Laar, *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity*.

built a network of commercial, political and cultural connections that helped to promote the international position of the city. During this period, the city was regularly called 'Little London,' and recognised as a centre of tolerance where the international community of trade convened.¹⁸³ The city of Rotterdam developed into the transit port of German hinterland in the nineteenth century and became the most important continental port before the Second World War. The working port attracted a lot of migrants and within a period of hundred years the number of inhabitants had increased from less than 100.000 to 600.000 in 1940. The port economy stimulated the port city to develop a sense of modernism, which was unique for the Netherlands and this had a great impact on the post-war development. In May 1940 the Germans destroyed the innercity, but within two weeks' time the decision was made not to rebuild the old city but making a city according to the rules of Corbusian Modernism. The *Wederopbouw* - redevelopment with a metropolitan mentality of the business city- had the objective to fix the density problems of the pre-war period and build a modern, dynamic 'American city'.¹⁸⁴

Selling, marketing and branding Rotterdam



"Major works of modern infrastructures proved to be an effective tool to create a distinctive sense of modernism... Specific propagandistic touch stressed the campaign towards an important idea of a so-called Rotterdam-Renaissance."¹⁸⁵ The narrative of the reconstruction foster "the acceptance of internal rural Dutch migrants as a truly integral part of the city population."¹⁸⁶ Their fathers and great-grandfathers had built the working and port city of the 19th century. Now their sons and daughters developed the modernist city. To build the industrial port city, companies had to look outside the city for workers "willing to do the heavy work," as most of Rotterdam's working population flowed to well-paid jobs.¹⁸⁷ In 1963, the campaign to attract the Buitenlandse Arbeider -foreign workers- was developed (image). During this period, the city had a high influx of Cape

¹⁸³ Maurice Crul, Peter Scholten, and Paul van de Laar, "Conclusions: Coming to Terms with Superdiversity?," in *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity: The Case of Rotterdam*, ed. Peter Scholten, Maurice Crul, and Paul van de Laar, IMISCOE Research Series (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 23–24, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96041-8_12.

¹⁸⁴ van de Laar, "Modernism in European Reconstruction-Policy and Its Public Perception: The Image of Rebuilding Rotterdam, 1945 – 2000."

¹⁸⁵ van de Laar, 220.

¹⁸⁶ Maurice Crul, Peter Scholten, and Paul van de Laar, "Conclusions: Coming to Terms with Superdiversity?," in *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity: The Case of Rotterdam*, ed. Peter Scholten, Maurice Crul, and Paul van de Laar, IMISCOE Research Series (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 229.

¹⁸⁷ Crul, Scholten, and van de Laar, 48.

Verdeans, Moroccans and Turks, but other nationalities joined the increasing number of migrants.

The crisis of the 1970s marked the beginning of a new era for Europe's biggest port. To be sold as a commodity, the city needed to become attractive. To revitalise the urban economy and make it less dependent on the port's turnovers, a new urban and economic strategy was needed. The Rotterdammers image of the hard working citizens was no longer attractive.

The C'70 -Communication 1970 could be considered an Urban Propaganda Project -as termed by Boyle. The fourth large-scale festival in the history Rotterdam (after Ahoy 1950, Energy '55, Floriade 1960) was made to celebrate the 25 years after the liberation. While living in the city was considered to be a punishment,¹⁸⁸ and the Dutch Economic Institute (Nederlands Economisch Instituut) considered a "city in doubt" (1974).¹⁸⁹ The Rotterdam region had become the most polluted area of the Netherlands since the 60s which represented a halt to any further expansion of polluting industries like the petrochemical, shipbuilding, and metal industries.¹⁹⁰ The dependence on the port had to be reduced and the service industries needed to increase their contribution.

New, less polluting, high value-added industries, such as optical, medical and upcoming creative industries and those offering specialized services were the best option, but Rotterdam found them difficult to attract. These, often innovative, industries needed better trained and qualified staff than Rotterdam was able to supply. In addition, Rotterdam's urban and working-class image and civic climate (housing and living conditions) proved to be a formidable obstacle in realising these goals. The Rotterdammers' image as hard-working citizens in a newly built modern port city had lost appeal. Rotterdam was no longer the model city of the Netherlands or the workhorse of the Dutch economy.

The city council planned to communicate a newly approved redevelopment project to the citizens during the C70 festival, instead the event became the perfect setting for the "anti-modern" and the anti-pollution movement to protest. The protest showed the city as "a

¹⁸⁸ van de Laar, "Modernism in European Reconstruction-Policy and Its Public Perception: The Image of Rebuilding Rotterdam, 1945 - 2000."

¹⁸⁹ cf. Carola Hein and Paul Th. Van de Laar, "The Separation of Ports from Cities: The Case of Rotterdam," in *European Port Cities in Transition: Moving Towards More Sustainable Sea Transport Hubs*, ed. Angela Carpenter and Rodrigo Lozano, Strategies for Sustainability (Springer International Publishing, 2020).

¹⁹⁰ van de Laar, "Modernism in European Reconstruction-Policy and Its Public Perception: The Image of Rebuilding Rotterdam, 1945 - 2000."

soulless, cool and business like space of emptiness, without the lively functions of a city-centre."¹⁹¹

In early 1970s the inner city had transformed to market Rotterdam as cool and unattractive. The austere modernist approach had lost its attraction in a post-modern setting where people were seeking for comfortable, small-scale living zones. Coolsingel was reduced to four lanes, with a separate tram bedding in the middle with grass between and next to the rails, as if it were entering the city on a green carpet. Cycle paths were also laid out, coffee pavilions were erected on the pavement and trees and tubs full of flowers were used to brighten up the streets. Jan Verhoeven's housing complex on the old heliport site near the Hofplein, with its 'old Rotterdam' red ridge roofs, was seen as a particularly marked reaction to modernist urban planning: a return to the village in the city. In addition, this complex fitted the image of the compact city that informed policy during this period. The city council endeavoured to build more housing in the inner city, and this also had to be easily accessible by public transport. From the early eighties the city was given an unprecedented cultural stimulus: a new municipal library, the restoration of the Schielandshuis (the old city palace of the Waterboard, and former museum building of Boijmans and Historical Museum Rotterdam) a new Maritime Museum, an extension of the Museum of Ethnology (World Museum), and a new theatre, to give just a few examples.

1984 was the year when the city council started to think in "strategic ways" to put Rotterdam in the spotlight. The municipal board-**gemeentebestuur**- and the Rotterdammers sought ways to get rid of the pale, cold image of the city, culture and events were considered the best way to achieve this. Kees Bode, Head of External Relations at the Municipality of Rotterdam and right-hand man of Mayor Bram Peper was the first to use the term city marketing (Document Municipality 2018).

The marketing strategy of Rotterdam continued the extensive urban renewal and added a new district of modern extra-high skyscrapers. The so-called shift from a working city to a cultural city came with new shopping areas in the city centre and a cultural axis. In 1985 the city council launched the Inner City Plan, that aimed to developed four particular areas, designated as the Park Triangle, Central Square, Riverside City and Tunnel Route. The vision to build a "Manhattan on the Maas" inspired the urban regeneration of the Kop van Zuid. The most ambitious plans in the renewal period of Rotterdam continuously transforms the landscape of the city since 1987. Although the high-rise building in this city does not amount to much compared to many major world cities, it is considered the high-rise city of the Netherlands and from this derives its modern image.

¹⁹¹ van de Laar, 226.

High-rise in the city centre became more of a natural development as "statements and validation of [the city's] global status."¹⁹² The ninety-metre World Trade Centre tower appeared on top of the Stock Exchange and the new Nedlloyd head office arose on Boompjes. Next in line was Weena, where the offices of Nationale Nederlanden gave it the allure of a distinguished office boulevard, a centre of international financial services. Rotterdam was a port, in search for companies that corresponded to the glamour of the global economy. The coming-of a global city requires among many things, a building of a "starchitect" in the new landscape.¹⁹³ De Kop van Zuid is considered the "starchitect playground" of Rotterdam. As positioned in *The Guardian*:

*The majestic old brick warehouses of the shipping trade now stands a brash collection of starchitects' castoffs. There is a squarish stone shaft by Alvaro Siza, an irregular stack of coloured blocks by Mecanoo, a glowering grey hulk by Norman Foster and a convoluted assemblage by Renzo Piano, complete with a leaning wall of LEDs.*¹⁹⁴

De Rotterdam, by Dutch starchitect Rem Koolhaas's is the latest piece of the collection (1997-2013), it was conceived as a "vertical city" and according to the webpage of OMA "the architectonical masterpiece" was for "Rotterdam Zuid, a part of the city in need of rejuvenation and economic injection."¹⁹⁵ During the 1990s these regenerated waterfronts and older districts restoration were accompanied by "the Opzoomeren" – or social cleaning for 'smartening up streets and districts', and improve the image of the city.¹⁹⁶

From 2000, the inner city and that part of the left bank that was counted as part of the centre also became high-rise zones. Since 2003 fifteen high-rise projects have been in progress. 2004 saw the start of construction on the Coolsingel Tower on the site of the Oude Luxor theatre on Kruiskade, a giant measuring 215 metres high. The Erasmus Bridge (1996) also served as evidence of the 'global status of the city'. In the words of Van de Laar:

¹⁹² Peter Marcuse, "Space in the Globalizing City," in *The Globalizing Cities Reader*, ed. Xuefei Ren and Roger Keil, Second edition., The Routledge Urban Reader Series (New York: Routledge, 2017), 71.

¹⁹³ Leslie Sklair, "The Transnational Capitalist Class and Contemporary Architecture in Globalizing Cities," in *The Globalizing Cities Reader*, ed. Xuefei Ren and Roger Keil, Second edition., 1 online resource. vols., The Routledge Urban Reader Series (New York: Routledge, 2017).

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1614613>.

¹⁹⁴ Oliver Wainwright, "Rem Koolhaas's De Rotterdam: Cut and Paste Architecture," *The Guardian*, November 18, 2013, sec. Art and design.

¹⁹⁵ OMA, "De Rotterdam," accessed November 22, 2019, <https://oma.eu/news/de-rotterdam-announced-as-best-tall-building-in-europe>.

¹⁹⁶ Schoor and Laar, *Stad van formaat*.

Rotterdam reinvented its metropolitan self again from the 1990s onwards...

The economic dynamics of a modern vertical city soon became a trendsetter for young people living in a world, where television commercials, music channels and film producers, the whole of the cultural economy, rediscovered Rotterdam's marketing appeal as an urban place of branding and communicating.¹⁹⁷

The city was still struggling to change its economic structure, however. In 1999 Rotterdam Marketing was founded by the municipal service OBR – Urban development company- to profile Rotterdam as an international world city.¹⁹⁸ The campaign and celebration of *Rotterdam European Cultural Capital in 2001* presented Rotterdam as an attractive city of culture and art. Social problems arose in the cosmopolitan and multicultural city as evidenced by the drastic political shift when Pim Fortuyn's local party Liveable Rotterdam ended a period of post-war social-democratic hegemony. The assassination of the Dutch politician in 2002 can be considered in terms of Vanolo, a ghostly presence of the city.

Rotterdam actively started to make branding strategies in 2003.¹⁹⁹ Over the past years, three city branding strategies have been executed:

- 2004 'Rotterdam Durft!' - Rotterdam Dares: had the slogan 'Rotterdam, a young international city on the water, with a straight-forward and decisive mentality'. The municipality requested the campaign to one of Rotterdam's eldest advertising agency. The advertising campaign was made to position Rotterdam as a "distinctive city" and gain awareness in the global market. The role of the city brand manager was created and all the employees at the municipality were "*trained to embrace the new identity*". The strategy, however, did not serve to profile Rotterdam as an 'international player' and the municipality decided to improve it. In 2006 After 2 years of Rotterdam Dares, Rotterdam Marketing takes over from the OBR – Urban Development Rotterdam. The new strategy needs "*specialised marketing knowledge.*" The Economic Development Board (Edbr) "*was established to hold to the municipality a mirror of corporate life when regarding the economic development in the city.*"

¹⁹⁷ van de Laar, "Modernism in European Reconstruction-Policy and Its Public Perception: The Image of Rebuilding Rotterdam, 1945 - 2000," 228.

¹⁹⁸ cf. Saskia Sassen, "[Introduction]," in *The Global City*, New York, London, Tokyo (Princeton University Press, 1991), 17-21; Friedmann, "The World City Hypothesis."

¹⁹⁹ Belabas and Eshuis, "Superdiversity and City Branding."

In 2004 the moment is there, the first real city marketing campaign and strategy of Rotterdam is being launched: Rotterdam Dares!

Doe maar normaal en dan doe je al gek genoeg - Just act normal and then you'll act crazy enough (Presentation - Municipality 2018)

- 2006 'Rotterdam World Port, World City': "sea, people, rail, air and road."²⁰⁰ strengthens Rotterdam's international competitiveness. The campaign was led by the new Chief Marketing Officer (CMO), that following New York's model, was elected from outside the municipality. The definition of the brand was defined from the perspective of the harbour and the city, and the previous slogan was maintained. Although the campaign served to position the city internationally, the residents were feeling left out as they did not identify with the brand's identity. The brand was perceived only as an economic proposition.
- 2013 'Rotterdam, make it happen!': A public-private coalition created the current branding strategy. The Erasmus University Rotterdam and the city council were both conducting research and making interactive sessions with multiple stakeholders, including residents, to define their new brand strategy. Despite hiring different agencies, both the municipality and the university coincidentally approved the Make It Happen as a slogan (Interviews brand team 2020). The Municipality of Rotterdam and the Erasmus University Rotterdam decided to unite forces in order to become more competitive internationally. The alliance was completed with Port Authority of Rotterdam, Rotterdam Partners, Rotterdam Festivals, and Rotterdam Topsport.

The Rotterdam Make it Happen brand strategy was a move from marketing to branding management because it does not put forward the physical characteristics of the city, but the unique DNA of the city, and the mentality of the Rotterdammers (Interview Municipality 2020).

The brand is currently managed by the core partners, including the recently added Erasmus MC (2020), and it is built with a network of 20 brand partners, and fans (figure 15).

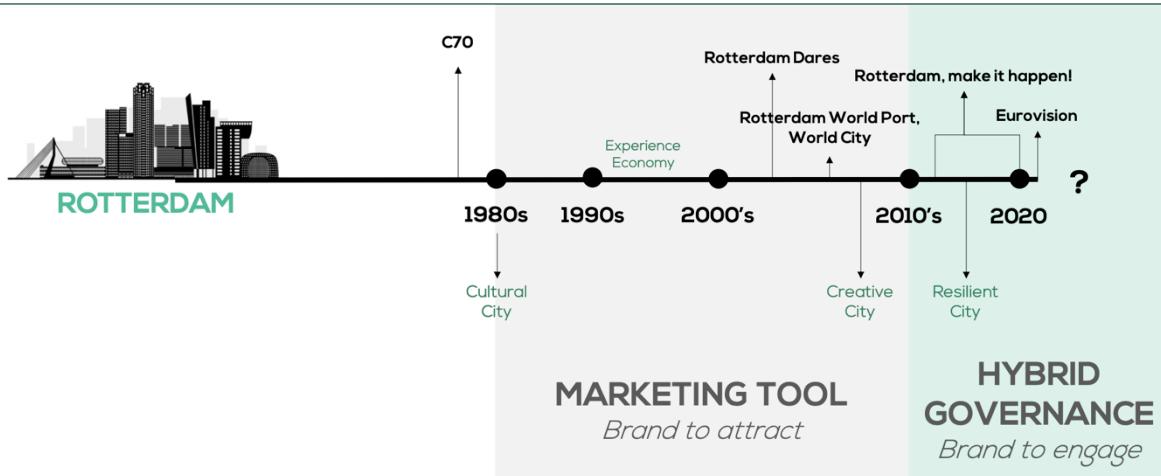
²⁰⁰ Belabas and Eshuis, 213.

Figure 15: Rotterdam's brand building network



Rotterdam's brand is evolving and becoming more complex. The evolution of the brand of Rotterdam follows the stages of the general evolution of city brands. Rotterdam was first a name to identify the location of a settlement that built a commercial reputation as the most important port of Europe. Then the city brand became a tool for marketing to attract wealth with service industries and the 'creative class'. Rotterdam's brand is now being built by a public-private partnership that seeks to attract international investment, talent and visitors.

Figure 16: Evolution of Rotterdam City Brand through branding



The super diverse society of Rotterdam is characterised for having weak or absent ties between the new and old Rotterdammers.²⁰¹ The Scientific Council for Government Policy (WWR) concluded in their latest report (2018) that "the more nationalities in a

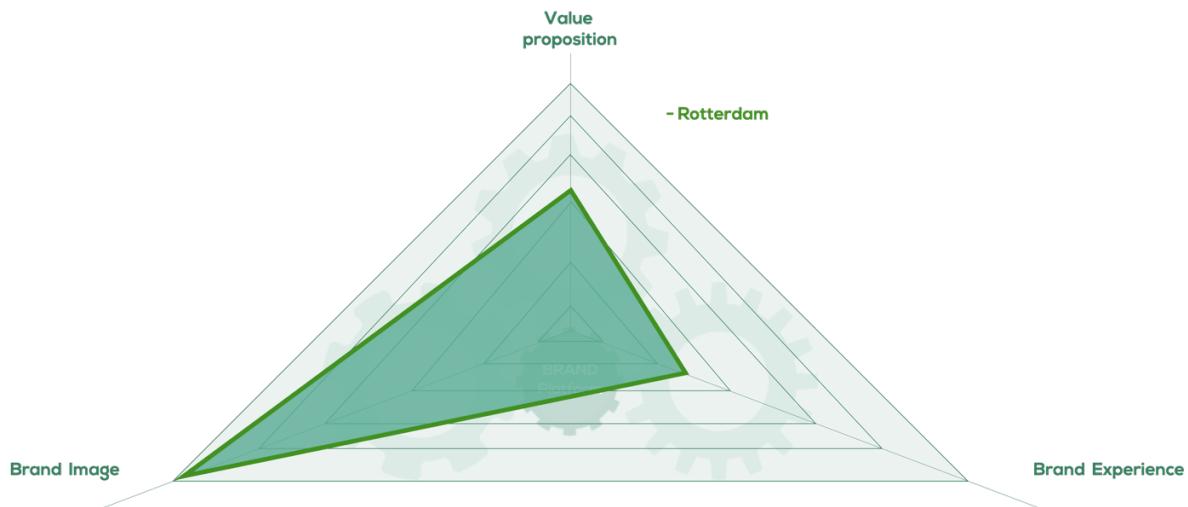
²⁰¹ Mieke Muijres and Noelle Aarts, "Welkom in Rotterdam! een studie naar interculturele ontmoetingen tussen 'oude' en 'nieuwe' Rotterdammers" (Wageningen UR, Wetenschapswinkel, 2011).

neighbourhood, the less cohesion residents experience.”²⁰² Despite the broad history of migration Rotterdam is a city where people live side by side and not with each other, they do not live together.²⁰³ Scholten, Crul, and Van de Laar (2019) evidenced that the lack of integration responds not only to social attitudes of Rotterdammers, but it is affected by market-led strategies:

An integration policy of superdiversity is not compatible with a vision in which Rotterdam – pushed by strong marketing efforts – wants to rebalance its population, making it more attractive to middle-classes. Rotterdam’s new urban government-led gentrification programs have been motivated by a politics of “urban revanchism”, in which there is no room for happy diversity.²⁰⁴

How can the city brand of Rotterdam be recalibrated to social cohesion? What can the city learn to develop the cohesive power of their brand? To find out how this can be made we will first analyse the current branding strategy through the three stages of the cohesive power model.

Defining Rotterdam city brand



As previously illustrated, as a holographic ‘whole brand’ system, Rotterdam is mainly built through both the brand image and the brand value proposition aspects. The Rotterdam

²⁰² Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, “De nieuwe verscheidenheid. Toenemende diversiteit naar herkomst in Nederland – Verkenning,” regeling (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, May 2018).

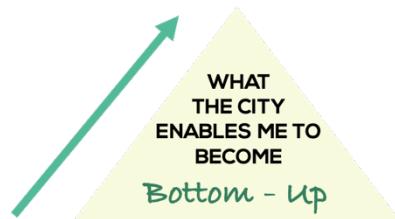
²⁰³ Scholten, Crul, and van de Laar, *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity*; Muijres, “Rotterdam! Een Studie Naar Interculturele Ontmoetingen Tussen ‘oude’ En ‘nieuwe’ Rotterdammers,” 273.

²⁰⁴ Scholten, Crul, and van de Laar, 52.

Make it Happen, brand alliance approved the new strategy for the next 5 years in June 2020 with a focus on the international market. The brand is used to attract

International Frontrunners, that is, international talent, visitors, investors, entrepreneurs, Intrinsicly motivated to contribute to and invest in sustainable growth. And by doing so does that in a typical Rotterdam way a bold forward culture; Entrepreneurial, experimental, that learns by doing. that is our DNA (Interview Rotterdam Partners).

In the interviews, the members of the brand team -core partners- recognised that the biggest challenge is to align different interests, including having different stakeholders. As each partner has different stakeholder, they choose to "unite forces" to become stronger internationally. Each partner, however, includes the guidelines of the brand alliance into their own "individual" brand strategies. The municipality, for example, said that their next step is to define the brand strategy for the internal stakeholders of the city, including residents.



In 2011 the OBR requested a research to identify the DNA of the Rotterdammers in order to re(define) the current city brand. The typical Rotterdam mentality and the DNA of the city was captured with the words: border-pushing, worldly and no-nonsense; and the city brand values became raw, entrepreneurial and international.

Rotterdam. Make it happen.

The mentality is distilled from an analysis of Rotterdammers from the past until now. From Leendert van der Vlugt who built the Van Nelle Factory, Boijmans van Beuningen who built the museum and Suze Groeneweg 1st woman in Parliament to Edwin Veenkens van Gers and Philip Powerl van Bird, Riek Bakker with the Erasmus Bridge, Clara Sies with the Food Bank, and Dave van der Heijden from the Powwow Festival.

They appear to have the following in common:

They had an idea → They saw a need → They took the space → They went for it → And they made it true.

That is characterizing of Rotterdam, the space with Rotterdam offers and that is which Rotterdam invites you too (Document Municipality 2018)

To bind and attract the target groups, all partners in the city *"have to embrace the distinctive characteristics of the city brand DNA and become a brand ambassador"*. To build the city brand image, the brand alliance chooses stories of Rotterdammers to create brand content. Top Events (Top moments) are used to gain international attention like the Eurovision song festival 2020 (re)scheduled for 2021.



We propagate the brand on the basis of three pillars. Namely content, brand partners and top moments. We look at what content the Rotterdam Make It Happen story can tell, which brand partners can help us to further spread the brand and which events and congresses suit our brand (Interview Rotterdam Partners 2020).

Rotterdam's branding management

The Brand of Rotterdam comes to life through the networks of the members of the brand alliance: Municipality Rotterdam, Port Authority of Rotterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam Partners, Rotterdam Festivals, Rotterdam Topsport and recently, Erasmus MC (2020). Together with the networks of the brand partners that have been increasing since the year 2014.

The promise of the new branding strategy is similar to the campaign of 'Think Different' that saved Apple in 1997.²⁰⁵ The strategy is based on values and the promise is defined to inspire the *International Frontrunners*:

²⁰⁵ cf. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEPbLqwKo6g>

Figure 17: The Rotterdammers that make it happen



**ROTTERDAM.
MAKE IT
HAPPEN.**

Strategy 2020-2024 - OUR PROMISE

We believe that it is not only about having the best ideas, it is not about from whom they are, or where they are from. It is about what you do with them or about what you reach with them. The best ideas come from free spirits, from people who see the opportunities and take the space. Those who have borderless ambitions and continue where others doubt. People with fearless(onverschrokken) dreams and ideals, who accept any challenge.

*The best ideas need people. People who see the world as it could be. **They are the entrepreneurs and the renewers, the teachers, the talents and the investors....** The people who make bridges and bind together. The dreamers and the doers. They are the pioneers who really make the ideas great. Who know where they must be. Who choose for a city where there is space to grow. The city full of opportunities, the city which is simmering with energy. With a world port that attracts and binds and that is a spring board for whom wants to conquer the world. Do you have an idea? Do you see the change? Take the space and go for it! Make it happen!*

The brand alliance as already established, uses the Brand DNA model to define and manage the city brand. This model, as described in chapter 2 is used by creative agencies to define with the brand teams the brand image.

To analyse the brand as a whole system, the brand strategy 2020-2024 was analysed through the 10 steps of the brand platform (Table 5).

Table 5: The Platform of Rotterdam City Brand

Step	Strategy	Analysis
1 Why must this brand exist?	Profile Rotterdam internationally by talent, companies and visitors by means of ROTTERDAM MAKE IT HAPPEN. And so contribute to economic value with societal impact on the city.	Brand to sell, to attract. !!
2 What is the brand's long-term vision?	We are striving to quality in growth or good growth, whereby economic development to the transition of old to new (digital, energy neutral and circular) and leads to an increase in welfare and wealth for all Rotterdammers.	Good growth for all ✓
2 What does the brand want to change in people's lives?	Rotterdam has plenty space for experiments. Pioneers work here to the solutions of tomorrow, to the change of old to new (digital, energy neutral and circular). Being a living lab makes Rotterdam relevant in the world and helps the city and the people who live in it move forward.	Groundbreaking - Move forward ✓
4 What are our values?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bold (raw); Authentic, direct, diverse, daring, characteristic eigenzinnig, big heart, laboratory, firm, no-nonsense, unpolished, young, battle, pride. Forward (entrepreneurial); Ambitious, daadkrachtig, can do, dynamic, energetic, innovative, changes, critical, pioneering, doing together, start-up, broad thinking, craftsmanship, talent, border-pushing. Culture (international); Junction, mainport, modern, 170 nationalities, architecture, researching, raw, space, transport world port, worldly, connection, water, network 	Culture is a characteristic not a value. !
5 What is the brand's specific know-how?	We position Rotterdam as a laboratory (literally, experimental zoo) for the world and aim to inspire front runners.	Not specific !!
6 What is our Heritage?	The new strategy does not mention the heritage of the reconstruction of the city after the war. The no-nonsense attitude is communicated with little relevance. The interviewees however did mentioned both aspects.	Not specify !
7 Where is our territory?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart City: is both technology, human and the combination of these two, is where collaboration leads to innovation. Healthy City: is a city which is sustainable, green and liveable, and which invites to and shows off a healthy life style. Circular City: is a self-regulating city wherein we are smart and efficient with resources, water, energy and waste. 	Focus without inclusion !
8 Which products/ services and actions best embody the values?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart: Smart City EXPO Barcelona, UPI Rotterdam, Ruggedised, Cambridge Innovation, Centre (CIC), Dutch Windwheel. Healthy: Opening UN Klimaatcentrum, Urban Future Global Conference?, Erasmus Centre for Entrepreneurship (ECE), De Urbanisten, Mobility Campus, Health Tech Campus Inclusive: Eurovision, Hogeschool Rotterdam Internationale, Architectuur Biennale Rotterdam (IABR) Circular: Best practices circular, International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), Ocean Clean-Up, Floating Farm, PortXL 	-
9 How do we communicate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart City: technology and humans Circular City: healthy, green and liveable Inclusive City: cross-overs, together and diverse 	Inclusive city added !!
Who are we addressing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Frontrunners are voorlopers (in dutch: walking ahead people). People who are intrinsically motivated to contribute to good growth. 	International focus !
10 What image do we render of themselves?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The typical Rotterdam mentality and the DNA of the city let themselves be caught with words like international, entrepreneurial and raw. Worldly, Groundbreaking and no-nonsense. 	

The analysis of the brand platforms shows the strengths of the brand, the opportunities and the critical points to improve. There are five important aspects to highlight are:

1. The brand has a long term future (step 2) related to the city as a whole. It is defined as growth for all and refers to welfare and wealth for all Rotterdammers. The reason why the city brand exists is defined in terms of selling the city internationally and aiming to attract international frontrunners. It mentions societal impact as a result of the selling of the city.
2. Step 3, what does the brand want to change in people's lives is defined as enabling the target to 'move forward' and be "ground-breaking". As these aspects are defined based on the mentality of the Rotterdammers' it gives ground to 'stretch' the meaning into different audiences. One criticism for the slogan came from the interviewee of Social program Hart van Zuid:

The slogan stands far from the reality of the people from Rotterdam South, their everyday reality, the struggle of keeping their head above the water and being able to put food on the table. You have to know that the average yearly income in Rotherham South is twenty-one thousand euros, that's really low. To them, this slogan doesn't mean anything. It feels distorted. I think that the company that came up with it really has no idea that the majority of this city is hustling. So if the slogan will be. Like a wordplay or hustling. Then I think you would include 80 percent, but this only targets 20 percent.

Considering both the definition of step 3 and the claim of the interviewee, 'moving-forward' could be a start to inspire and connect people from Rotterdam south. A common criticism, as also found in other cases in the literature, is to the use of English for the branding slogan claiming that people from the south could not connect with it. However, as evidenced through this thesis, the power of the brand relies on the association it develops in the minds of the stakeholders. The use of another language could require extra effort -depending on the strategies- but the associations can be developed. Another decision is to create the association to the Rotterdam or to what being a Rotterdamer is.

3. The specific know-how of the brand (step 5) lacks clarity. One of the objectives of defining the know-how of the city is to find the gap between the capabilities and what needs to be developed to 'conquer' the territories (step 7).

4. An inclusive city is one of the pillars in step 9: How do we communicate? This step is related to the brand image that the brand alliance aims to position and sell, which responds to the long term vision of the city brand, or step 2. The focus of the activities and the efforts do not consider an inclusive city (table 6). This represents the most critical gap, as it can create tensions with the residents. As evidenced in the literature creating 'fake city images' can eventually destroy the brand.

Table 6: The gap in Rotterdam city branding

Focus	Content Pillars
Smart City	Smart City
Healthy City	Healthy City
Circular City	Circular City
	Inclusive City

Gap image vs. reality

The strategy of the city brand aims to help progress all the people that live in the city. All members of the brand alliance however, explained how the content shared through all different channels aimed only for the international market. How can the brand 'walk the talk' or "put the money where the mouth is" - as often mentioned by the respondents? How can Rotterdam's city brand develop the cohesive power of brands?

Rotterdam is make it happen. Is an international playing field for entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial people. And we want to boost that in a way that contributes to that sustainable growth and sustainable for us is defined by circular, smart, healthy and inclusive. Inclusive is a point that we are really trying to get across because it is voorwaarde; it is a basic requirement needed to achieve the other goals

(Interview Rotterdam Partners 2020).

4.2 Developing Rotterdam's cohesive power

Strategies aiming to attract visitors, investments and tourist, often require that cities like Rotterdam go through spatial transformations. As described by Lewicka (2011), forced relocations are detrimental to the health and physiological functioning of people as they disrupt the automatized routines that create bonding and attachment to a place. State-led gentrification, like the ones experienced in Rotterdam, cause community displacement, generate a lack of belonging and sometimes even rivalry and resentment.²⁰⁶ The fluidity of the contemporary world, as expressed by Lewicka poses a big challenge: "how to reconcile the need for close emotional ties to specific places."²⁰⁷ Brands as mentioned before, could become a solution to overcome this challenge, by developing the cohesive power. City brands can enable interactions within the city experience and create a sense of community.

Rotterdam's brand society needs to be stakeholder-centric to develop the cohesive power of brands. As previously explained, the existence of the brand society is the result of the meaningfulness of the stakeholder experience. The last part of this chapter will have a quick simulation of the brand society model for Rotterdam.

Rotterdam needs to develop a coherent brand experience

Using four interviews from different stakeholders, and a recent research published by the municipality, the city brand experience can be assessed on a micro level. The exercise will allow us to evidence the complexity of the process. It is meant to be for illustrative purposes and not conclusive.

1. **International Frontrunner:** urbanist and entrepreneur from Budapest. She has been living in the city for the past 8 years and in 2019 was awarded **€36,000** -in the City Lab 010 Program- to develop the **Genestelde Wand** - Nested Wall project.²⁰⁸ The CityLab010 was mentioned in the interviews with some members of the brand alliance as one of the strategies that the city uses to make the brand experience come to life. When talking about Rotterdam Make it Happen she first said: "*To be honest, I always*

²⁰⁶ cf. Halil Özpamuk, *Mijn stad is mijn hart* (VPRO, 2018); Arjen van Veen, "Co-creatie op een Rotterdamse pleintje: eindeloos veel lullen, en dan een beetje poeten," De Correspondent; Belabas, Eshuis, and Scholten, "Re-Imagining the City"; Bonakdar and Audirac, "City Branding and the Link to Urban Planning: Theories, Practices, and Challenges"; Berg, *Femininity As a City Marketing Strategy*.

²⁰⁷ Lewicka, "Place Attachment," 226.

²⁰⁸ CityLab 010, "Genestelde Wand." 1. The project aims to improve urban biodiversity and create a natural living environment by making 'apartments' for birds on the blank walls in the city of Rotterdam.

misunderstand this slogan. I don't Get it." But as the interview continued, while talking about the idea she had proposed in the City Lab 010 platform, the slogan was brought out again and this time, she said:

I always felt this make it happen as a top-down happening, like the government that makes it happen. If I win with my idea it would be an interesting shift, it becomes more bottom-up. It would be nice to see if it's really make it happen from all, if the citizens are in control or participate in the developments. Experimental. – International Frontrunner.

When discussing the connection with the community, however, the social problems of the city are acknowledged.

A big challenge for Rotterdam is social segregation. I think the urban planning contributes to this but also people of course. Neighbourhoods do not have a healthy mixture, and Dutch people tend to move to neighbourhoods where there are more Dutch people, look at Kralingen (one of the wealthiest parts of Rotterdam; IP). Rotterdam when it comes to social grouping is like a salad bar; it has separate ingredients next to each other but never mixed.

The experience of this International frontrunner seems to be aligned with the bold, forward and international values of the brand. The experiences described by the respondent build upon the smart, circular and healthy city – she described cycling lanes as one of the main characteristics of the city. The interaction with other stakeholders such as investors and companies are built through the City Lab 010. The relationships with residents however, is lacking, as she confirmed only to have contact with a migrant international community (figure 18).

Figure 18: The Rotterdam brand experience of an International Frontrunner



The City Lab 010 is considered by one of the respondents as a platform that proves how the brand works for inclusion. *“These initiatives can be started in any part of Rotterdam. North, south, West... it is a combination.”* The respondent of the social program of Rotterdam South perceived something different:

What we see in south is that they don't participate in the platform, because the system is not made for them. The problem is that if you don't really speak Dutch or if you're not really that equipped to handle a computer, there is no way you can get such a subsidy. These subsidies goes for the white, highly educated above average income people. There is a system failure that can't be fixed with branding because it's just an empty story right now. - Social program Hart van Zuid

A similar problem happened recently for the Eurovision Song Festival -before corona breakdown. The municipality reserved free tickets for people that live on-or-under the poverty line so that they could be part of the *Top Moment*. However, the residents from the south did not claim the tickets.²⁰⁹ One of the respondents from the

²⁰⁹ cf. Potters, “Nog Volop Gratis ‘Minima-Kaartjes’ Voor Songfestival.”

Municipality recognised that the mistake was due to a lack of awareness from the organiser of how people from Rotterdam South could access to the contest.

The problem was related to the fact that people from the south, most of the time, have more difficulties with filling in papers. If they would have used maybe The Rotterdam-Pass (that most of them have) to get the information for the free ticket, it's really simple because they don't have to feel anything. That would have been a good system to do it. [The city branders] gave this advice, but they [contest organisers] chose to put people fill their name, and their income, and made it more difficult for people to do it (Interview Municipality 2020).

2. **Resident:** Rotterdamer -Dutch origin- 65 years. He left the city because *"it was too boring when he was young (1975-)." He came back to the city in 1999 to live in the Kop Van Zuid and moved a year ago to Schiedam. The municipality of Schiedam is part of the Rotterdam metropolitan area and as explained by the respondent of the municipality, it is one aim of the branding strategy to create an identity that unites the region – this includes Schiedam.*

I moved to Schiedam 3 months ago because the best house I could find with a fair price was here. This is not Rotterdam, although it is near. The city changed for me because it now has a youth culture and I grew older. The Lijnbaan that used to be a shopping street for all kinds of people is now for maximum 25 to 30 years old. Rotterdam has been taken over by capitalist firms which means day to day places like restaurants and clothing stores transform so that the city can be in the "top 5 of interesting cities". – Rotterdamer 65 years old.

As described by Braun et al. residents often play two roles, as an integral part of the city brand and as ambassador. A third role is largely neglected by city branders, the role of residents as citizens that pay taxes and vote.²¹⁰ As evidenced by the interviews, the brand alliance is well aware of the role the residents play in communicating the brand. Residents are relevant for the alliance as makers of the brand and 'a

²¹⁰ Braun, Kavaratzis, and Zenker, "My City - My Brand."

communication channel', i.e. ambassadors. Residents are hardly considered as users and even less as owners (citizens).

The inhabitants of Rotterdam are our most important ambassadors! They are the ones who work on beautiful innovation, for example where we create stories around. They are the people who use #rotterdammakeithappen on social media and thus tell their story. So they are very important (Interview Rotterdam Partners 2020).

The Rotterdam experience of the Rotterdamer in Schiedam is perceived as a displacement story. It is evident for him that he is no longer living in Rotterdam and that he does not longer fit in the city. The values of the city brand, however, are understood and generate engagement. When asked about the city brand, he immediately connected the Rotterdam Make it happen to the story of building the war. The identity is rooted in the Rotterdammers of the past that rolled their sleeves and built the city. For him, the no-nonsense attitude is related to "Wat koop jij daar voor? - What does it bring us, and why would we do that?" (figure 19).

Figure 19: The Rotterdam brand experience of a resident in the Rotterdam Area



A branding governance requires internal coherence

3. **Urban developer:** One of the leaders of the Sociaal Programma at Hart van Zuid (Heart of South) Rotterdam. The Hart van Zuid is one of the most recent urban regeneration projects of the city that aims to make this area of the city, “*the next city centre.*” The municipality approved the project (to the two urban development companies) but with the condition that they would invest in talent development, foster participation of the community and create new jobs. When the project started, however, there were no demands for ‘integration, social cohesion or **inclusion**’. When asked why the respondent evidenced a lack of internal alignment.

That's a general problem, the government is organised in columns and doesn't work integrally. So if city developments writes the tender for such a big urban development project, they do mention social development goals, but they don't speak to their colleagues of the Department of Social Development. So the policies of those two departments, they're not integrated.

This verbatim confirms the already evidenced by Belabas et al., Amsterdam and Rotterdam evidenced a lack of interaction between urban planners and city branders.²¹¹

The Hart Van Zuid was “*advised not to use the make it happen brand*”. They are now using OpZuid. Alles is OpZuid -everything is on south, everyone is on south. In the interviews with the members of the brand alliance, the arguments of the decision vary. The municipality, recognises it as a challenge for the future to connect the south. Another of the respondents said:

Hart Van Zuid is not focused on attracting international front runners. Why should they use the slogan Rotterdam make it happen if there is no common ground on the targets?

The Hart Van Zuid however, is a project designed to attract the international frontrunners. As one Policy Adviser for the area of south said:

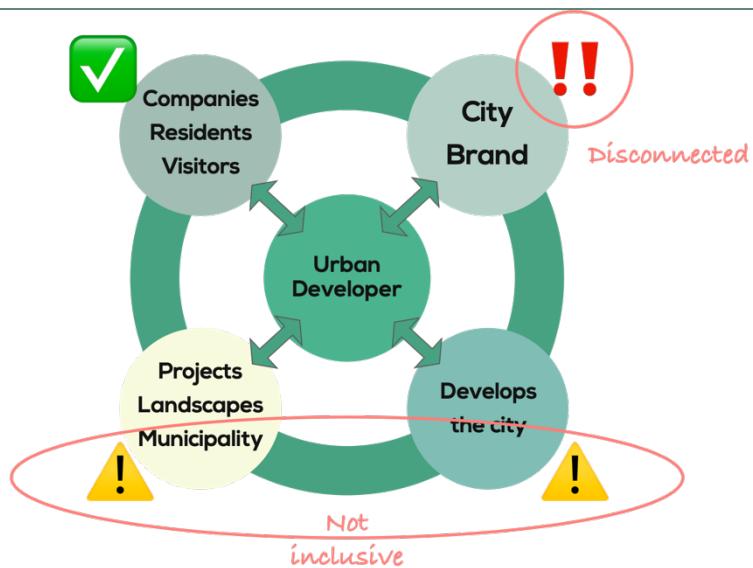
²¹¹ Warda Belabas, Jasper Eshuis, and Peter Scholten, “Re-Imagining the City: Branding Migration-Related Diversity,” *European Planning Studies* 28, no. 7 (July 2, 2020): 1315–32.

We are working in the area for transition, new people will come to live in the area. So in the future, we have a different population. And we have to watch that what we develop now is flexible and can contribute to the social cohesion for the people now, but also to people in the future, and maybe that they can meet each other and they understand each other and they like to live with each other in the same area. Now, that's a challenge. For the old and the new population to find each other and come together.

This verbatim also stresses the relevance of using city brands to contribute to social cohesion. To generate attachment to the brand society and not only a sense of place, that is, a place attachment.

The city brand experience developed and perceived by the urban developer is not connected with the city brand, and is lacking alignment and inclusion.

Figure 20: The Rotterdam brand experience of an urban developer

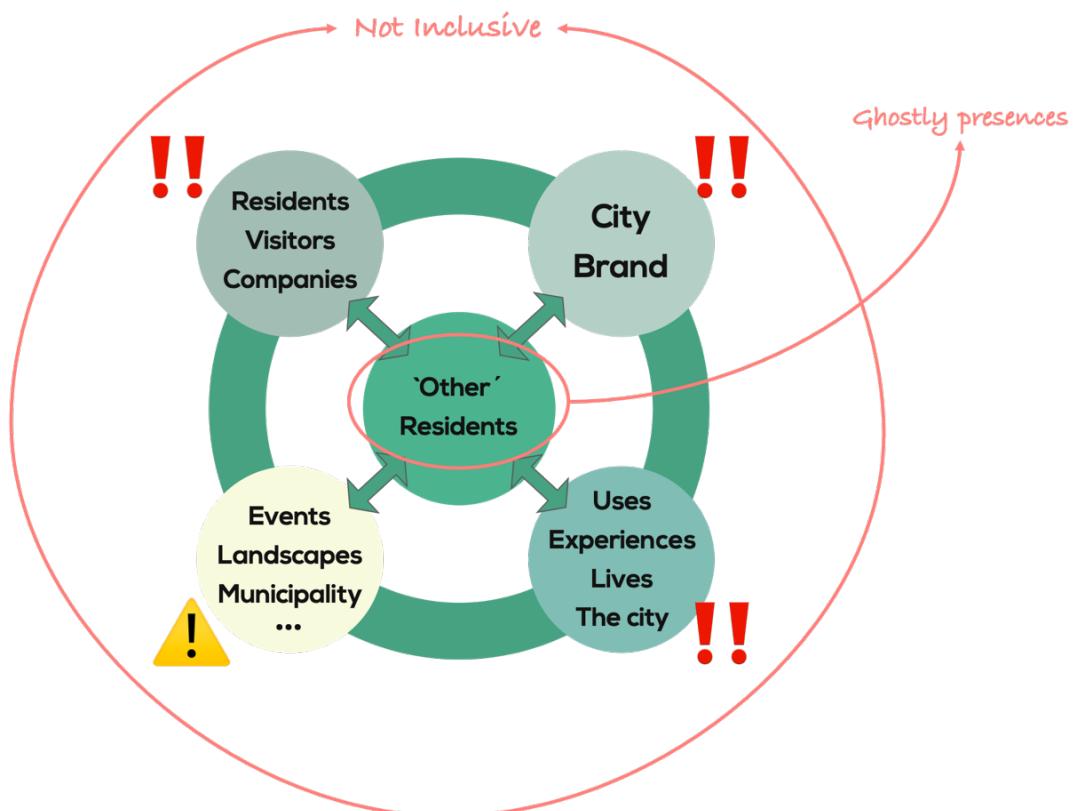


4. **The municipality:** On December 2019, the Head of Communication Municipality of Rotterdam wrote an article recognising the lack of inclusive communication of the municipality. The recognition came after the City branding team of the municipality requested the research. The research is, as explained by one of the respondents, one of the actions that the city branding team is doing to make sure that the city brand is coherent in all contact points of the brand experience.

The Rotterdammer' has many faces. Unfortunately, the communication from the municipality towards that city is not. Too often there is still communication from the world of native Dutch people. Unconsciously and unintentionally, prejudice plays a role in the communication, according to a recent and unique study. This needs to be improved; the city is asking for it -Head of Communications Municipality of Rotterdam

Rotterdam's society is formed by more than 180 nationalities, that speak more than 100 languages and follow the most important religions. There are first and second generation of immigrants, high skill and low skill workers, **international frontrunners and 'others'**. Inclusive city is a gap between the reality and the communication of the brand. In terms of Vanolo, the 'other' Rotterdammers from the south are ghostly presences and voices of the city (brand).

Figure 21: The brand experience delivered by the municipality to 'other' residents



²¹² Carola de Vree-van Wagendonk, "Onderzoek Naar Inclusieve Communicatie | LinkedIn.

Erasmus University is aware of the need to deliver the brand experience. But as acknowledged by the respondent, they can only do their part.

"Erasmus University Rotterdam makes sure that the experience in the university doesn't have frictions. The municipality is responsible for making sure that all the city makes it happen! that the city lives by the brand".

This verbatim evidences the challenge that a multilevel governance possess.

Cohesive brands are society-centric.

The brand alliance as already explained, will focus their efforts on the Smart City, Healthy City and Circular City. These choices also generate guidelines for the governance of the city, which in turn transforms on challenges for the municipality. To name a few:

- Smart City: considers the combination of people and technology. As mentioned before, residents in south struggle when handling a computer. Within the city brand experience, how to include them in the strategy becomes a challenge.
- Healthy City: considers a healthy lifestyle. Rotterdam is the city of the Netherlands with the highest rates of child diabetes.²¹³ One of the causes could be residential segregation; the "environmental context of diet and disparities in access to healthful foods."²¹⁴ Rotterdam south neighbourhoods are disproportionately exposed to fast food -Kapsalon places- and few grocery shops. The municipality is supporting two projects that are aiming to improve this experience. Communal gardens and a project awarded by City Lab 010 to combat diabetes could be opportunities for the city branders to create positive associations with the brand. A first step to reframing the relationship between the residents and the brand and build a dialogue with these voices.
- Circular City: relates to waste. Rotterdam is a city where garbage is commonly seen everywhere in the street, outside the garbage bins. How can the city branders enable the improvement of this part of the city brand experience?

The challenge to align all the stakeholders are well known by the city branders. One of the respondents of the municipality said that their next step is to make the municipality

²¹³ cf. Engelina A. J. M. Spaans et al., "The Incidence of Type 1 Diabetes Is Still Increasing in the Netherlands, but Has Stabilised in Children under Five (Young DUDEs-1)," *Acta Paediatrica (Oslo, Norway: 1992)* 104, no. 6 (June 2015): 626–29.

²¹⁴ cf. Naa Oyo A. Kwate, "Fried Chicken and Fresh Apples: Racial Segregation as a Fundamental Cause of Fast Food Density in Black Neighborhoods," *Health & Place* 14, no. 1 (March 2008): 32–44.

aware of the importance of embracing the corporate brand, starting at the top level. The research conducted to assess the communication of the municipality, previously mentioned, could serve as evidence for this claim. The municipality is paying close attention to the result of this research, to apply it on the future.

Branding governance could enable the creation of **Rotterdam's We society**, as named by Rotterdam's mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb.²¹⁵ The cohesive power of a brand is an effort that requires coherence, consistency and time. A well-executed brand experience could stimulate the connections within the government and the different cultural groups in the city but requires structural efforts. Social projects like BoTu -a 10 year project to develop the first resilient district in the city in the highly diverse low income neighbours Bospolder (Bo) and Tussendijken (Tu) in Rotterdam-West- evidenced an interest of the city to search for different strategies for social cohesion.²¹⁶ Perhaps the city brand could also contribute and be used as the social glue of Rotterdam's society.

A coherent brand experience can develop an inclusive brand society, which in turn is able to enable the interaction between multiple stakeholders and multiple identities and develop a cohesive power. In order to achieve this, based on the **Cohesive Power Model**, Rotterdam must:

(RE) DEFINE

To manage a brand is to oversee the brand as a system and orchestrate the network of processes, relationships, definitions, and associations. Based on the findings of our platform analysis, Rotterdam must improve four steps of the platform:

1. Include social cohesion in the reason why the city brand exists (step 1). In this way, in the process to create an attractive image the Rotterdam city brand can also guide an experience that connects to a shared identity and enables interactions within the society.
2. Define what the city brand enables **all** Rotterdammers to do (step 3, step 10). For example, what is the meaning of 'ground-breakers' and 'moving-forward' for the residents of south?
3. Specify the know-how (step 5) of the brand in order to identify the gap between the capabilities and what needs to be developed to 'conquer' the territories (step 7).
4. The brand image must be coherent to the brand experience. Therefore, step 9: How do we communicate? Must be in line with the reason why and the long-term goals (step 1, 2).

²¹⁵ cf. Ahmed Aboutaleb, "The We Society: Giving Each Other Space and Care," no. 10 (2017): 8.

²¹⁶ cf. "Veerkrachtig BoTu 2028," *Social Impact by Design*, gobotu.nl.

MANAGE

Rotterdam is an incomplete city brand hologram.

As previously described, the city brand is built through an oscillation between a bottom-up and a top-down. The municipality along with the brand alliance and the brand partners must constantly evaluate how the brand experience is lived by all stakeholders, and how the value proposition and the brand image are perceived (bottom-up process) in order to redefine the brand platform (top-down process). What the city enables people to do and whom the brand is must constantly be re-defined to guarantee the coherence of the brand system and adapt the city brand to the changes in the brand society.

ENABLE

An inclusive brand society can only be developed within a consistent brand experience. When the city brand becomes the guideline of governance, policies are designed to deliver the brand experience. And the internal and external stakeholders are inspired to live by the brand.

The cohesive power of the Rotterdam brand could enable the creation of a city brand society able to create a shared identity within a multiplicity of identities. Just like a hologram can be divided in a virtually infinite number of parts. The city brand holographic system can be built out of 'infinite' parts - Capax Universi. Rotterdam city brand is not built out of parts but into parts and so far, the bottom-up process of Rotterdam's brand has reflected only a few stakeholders. When more voices are considered in the definitions of the brand, the more complete the 'whole brand' hologram is.

Participatory practices allow the construction a more complete 'whole brand'. How to enable participation? Could be a question for further research, as the multilevel and multidimensional nature of city brands can enable other ways of participation based on informal leaders of the communities or even through digital platforms. As described by Vanolo, in destination branding digital platforms like Trip Advisor allows visitors to leave their feedback and contribute to the improvement of process and definition of the experience.²¹⁷ The used of tracking Apps in COVID-19 and the fast improvements of digital platforms could become a tool in the future to evaluate the city brand experience. Residents could use similar technologies to monitor the coherence in the branding governance constantly.

²¹⁷ cf. Vanolo, *City Branding The Ghostly Politics of Representation in Globalising Cities*.

5: Recalibrating City Brands

Indigenous residents as well as colonizers, ditchdiggers as well as architects, migrant workers as well as mayors, housewives as well as housing inspectors, are all active in shaping the urban landscape.

Dolores Hayden

Rotterdam, like other global cities, applied marketing and branding methods as a tool to survive deindustrialisation and shift to a cultural city. The application of marketing and branding methods to develop the city are often followed by state-led gentrification and increased social tensions. City brands have undergone a metamorphosis that positions them beyond the realms of marketing. City brands have developed the power to inspire and create cohesion around their values; this has made them subject of multidisciplinary attention. Against this background, city branding can transform from being a cause of the problem to being part of the solution.

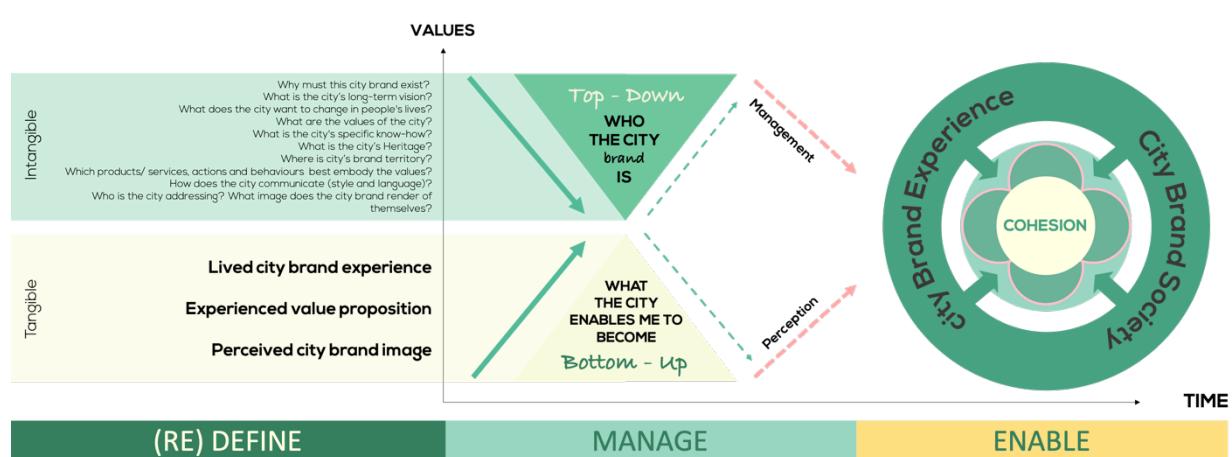
The use of city branding for social cohesion will only be possible when there is political stability (legitimacy). And the city has policies that aim for equal opportunities, reduction of disparities and economic inclusion. The components identified by this thesis as being **the major generators of social cohesion** are shared values, participation in society, recognition of diversity, and a sense of community.

Business brands can integrate and connect communities when customers perceive a consistent brand through the brand image, the brand value proposition and the brand experience. These three interdependent and interconnected aspects form the brand as a 'whole system'. The coherence of the brand system is overseen with a sharply written brand platform that is constantly redefined through a bottom-up and top-down process. When the organisation is managed 'by the brand', the brand is able to inspire both inside and outside the organisation. As a result, the brand experience is consistent and enables the interaction between the different stakeholders. With time, deeper bonds are developed and a sense of community emerges. When brand communities are customers centric and the whole organisation lives the brand, the cohesive power of brands is developed. City branding can apply insights from brand communities in order to enable inclusive brand societies and contribute to social cohesion.

As said by Kornberger, "Brands are symbolic resources for identity construction: [they] provide enough meaning so we can build our lives on them; but they allow for a level of playfulness that does not put chains around our ankles."²¹⁸ This multilevel and multidimensional nature of city brands makes them capable of becoming the social glue of superdiverse cities like Rotterdam. City brands can develop the power to connect beyond nationality, religion, gender, age, academic level, language, and other identifiers. This thesis has identified 3 phases that will develop the cohesive power of city brands to contribute to the social cohesion of societies (figure 22).

1. Cities must constantly **redefine the brand (platform) in participatory processes**. The inclusion of different voices transforms into a more complete 'whole brand' system.
2. The city brand is created through a **constant oscillation between top-down and bottom-up processes**. The city branders should constantly evaluate how the brand and the value proposition are perceived, and the city brand experienced lived. In order to deliver a consistent city (brand) experience.
3. Urban governance must use the brand platform as the compass to develop a **coherent city (brand) experience**.

Figure 22: City brands Cohesive power model



²¹⁸ Kornberger, *Brand Society*, 270.

Cities like Amsterdam, Barcelona and Rotterdam with multicultural societies could use city branding as a strategy to strive towards social cohesion. Governing cities with the City brands Cohesive power model can contribute to the cohesion of cities in four ways:

1. City branding as a politics of representation **gives visibility and a voice to vulnerable communities of the city.**
2. Brands are holographic systems. A 'whole city brand' can **create an identity around shared values** within a superdiverse city.
3. Consistent city brand experiences **enable relationships** and generate a sense of community.
4. City branding can be used by cities to **recognise and accept diversity** as a strong heritage and reduce tensions between newcomers and established residents.

To understand if and how city brands can contribute to the social cohesion of cities, this thesis has discussed history, theories and systems. The conclusion can be summarised in a simple claim: **if city brands are the values and the mentality of a city and its residents, then the brand must come 'to live' and be experienced by all of us, in the city. Without exceptions.** What this claim implies however, is as complex as the city.

Economist like Emmanuel Saez, Gabriel Zucman, Kate Raworth, Mariana Mazzucato and Thomas Piketty are redrawing the basic bricks of economics. These and other scholars like Rutger Bregman are rethinking the role of the public sector, redefining successful growth and writing alternatives theories for the Economics 101. With that same spirit, **why not recalibrate city branding as well?**

The corona crisis has undoubtedly open a door to reconsider the old ways. On May 2020, the UN World Tourism Organisation estimated that earnings from international tourism could decrease 80% this year and that 120m jobs could be lost. Critical voices are being louder against cheap tourism, and the attempts to control mass tourism like tourist taxes in Barcelona and Amsterdam, could increase and become a trend.²¹⁹ Cities and city marketers are now looking to increase local consumption. Searching ways for cities to increase their social cohesion also gains relevance within the challenges ahead. It is still unclear what repercussions will the corona crisis have on societies, and if social distancing will affect social cohesion. How will the crisis impact the already fragmented and polarized neighbourhoods? What is certain is that the corona crisis is reminding local governance of the importance of social bonding for community resilience.

²¹⁹ Christopher de Bellaigue, "The End of Tourism?," *The Guardian*, June 18, 2020, sec. Travel.

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