

Chapter 9

Conclusions



Chapter 9 Conclusions

9.1 Summary of main findings of the case studies

The findings of the three case studies included in this thesis have been discussed in detail in earlier chapters together with the main conclusions on the three cities' current marketing efforts and their future needs. Table 9.1 attempts a summary and parallel presentation of the main findings in each city. The table also incorporates the cities' evaluation in a) fundamental theoretical suggestions on city marketing, b) the elements of the theoretical framework of this study (see chapter 3) and c) the categories of city branding components as identified in the previous chapter (see Table 8.1). The next section discusses the main cross-case conclusions (already evident in table 9.1) in more detail. Together they lead to a new synthesis of city branding components, which is presented and analysed in section 9.2 and constitutes a key result of this study.

9.2 Cross-case Conclusions ¹

This section identifies and outlines several issues regarding city marketing and city branding that need to be better addressed in order to proceed to an improved implementation of city marketing that would increase its contribution to local economic, cultural and social development. These issues have emerged through the research undertaken for this thesis in Amsterdam, Budapest and Athens as analysed in relevant chapters and summarised in Table 9.1. It is important to repeat at this point the matter of generalisation of the results of the case studies reported in this thesis, which has already been discussed in chapter 2. As explained in relevant literature (e.g. Yin 2003) the purpose of generalising case study results is not to generalise from one case to another but to generalise a particular set of results to some broader theory. In this sense, the effort of the present thesis, apart from examining the marketing efforts of the three cities, was to identify from the cities investigated the issues that seemed to limit the effectiveness of city marketing, so that new suggestions could be made to enrich relevant theory. The issues included in this section are the result of the attempt to generalise the findings of the case studies undertaken for this thesis into the broader theory of city marketing. Broadly, the issues deal with two types of problems. On the one hand they concern specific difficulties facing city marketing implementation caused by political or administrative reality

¹ This section has been published as part of Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2008

Table 9.1: Main findings of the case studies

Element	Amsterdam	Budapest	Athens
Interest in marketing	High	Growing	Growing
Understanding of marketing and the marketing process	Common/collective understanding of marketing Good attempt at following process Strong market research	Dependent on individuals (not common) Fragmented activities Limited to promotion	No common understanding Sporadic and fragmented activities Limited to promotion
Role of marketing in development and goals set	Large role of marketing Wide goals covering a range of fields	Limited to tourism development Sensible goals for the cultural centre strategy	Limited to tourism development Sensible goals in tourism
Understanding/implementation of branding	Mostly limited to promotional power of branding Dynamic campaign	Limited to visual elements Insufficient branding strategy	Limited to visual elements Insufficient branding strategy
Development of long-term vision	Vision development debatable Long-term character evident	No long-term vision and planning	No long-term vision and planning
Organisational structure/Cooperation	Satisfactory organisational structure Attempt at broad cooperation Broad support for strategy	Fragmented organisational structure Cooperation mostly informal	Organisational structure fragmented Need for metropolitan structure
Involvement of local communities	Not clear in vision development	Not evident	Not evident
Infrastructure	Adequate prior state Limited integration in marketing strategy	Steady improvement Not integrated in marketing strategy	Dramatic recent improvement Not integrated in marketing strategy Used heavily in promotion
Landscape strategies	Limited integration in marketing strategy Canals heavily used in promotion	Not integrated in marketing strategy Heritage and natural landscape used heavily in promotion	Not integrated in marketing strategy Potential of Olympic sites (especially Elliniko and Faliro) slowly developed Sea side setting used heavily in promotion
Behaviour and Opportunities	Limited efforts Attempt at targeting creative individuals	Limited efforts Financial incentives for specific sectors (through national agencies) Emphasis on festivals	Inadequate efforts Successful Olympics but slow reactions
Communications	Adequate Focus on people	Adequate Focus on cultural events and socialist past	Adequate (together with national campaigns) Desire to escape the sea & sun image

in the cities; on the other hand they deal with certain gaps between the theory of city marketing and the way in which it is understood and practiced in the cities. The discussion is structured under seven headings that are raised here in an attempt to begin a process of re-examination and refinement of the concepts of city marketing and city branding that will inform their future application.

9.2.1 Collective appreciation of city marketing

Before the marketing effort starts, there is a need for a public discussion on what city marketing is, what it can achieve, what actions it includes and why it is useful for the specific city's conditions. That public discussion will lead to a collective understanding and agreement in the meaning and content of relevant terms and an appreciation of the goals set. This need is particularly acute for city branding. It is, perhaps, not necessary to adopt in practice the latest or more accurate theoretical and scientific explanations. The most important is to develop a common understanding, which contributes two benefits. First, the knowledge this discussion spreads generates more support in favour of city marketing, precisely because of this collective appreciation of what city marketing is and how it can support the development of the city. Secondly, it generates a common perception and a common language of communication, avoiding individual interpretations of certain issues that demand collective action.

9.2.2 Coordination, cooperation and role allocation

The establishment of a body that will have the task to gather together all stakeholders and coordinate actions is obviously a necessity for any marketing effort and a very basic step of city marketing implementation. It is, sometimes, enough on its own to generate certain dynamics that might afterwards lead to better implementation and initiatives. For large cities, this is best done on a metropolitan level, if nothing else because people (residents and visitors, as well as investors and developers) experience the city as a whole, and administrative boundaries of municipalities and other levels of local authorities are in essence meaningless for them. Political and administrative reality in most cities is inadequate to deal with successful marketing implementation. Closely connected to this issue are two other needs of effective city marketing implementation. First is the achievement of as wide a cooperation as possible in order to ensure a feeling of fairness in decision making, support for the strategy chosen and the actions taken and, more importantly, avoid conflicting actions from within the city itself. Second is the matter of role allocation for all participants in the marketing

effort, so that problems of reduplication of actions are overcome. This is a particularly delicate matter, especially if the issue of widespread decision making is considered. "Intelligent city marketing would be a broad network of communication, of information and exchange, of actions to raise awareness, while at the same time respecting the city's complexity and heterogeneity" (Kalandides 2006:6), something which "can only be achieved if decision making is widespread – much against the common view of needing to concentrate everything in one hand" (Kalandides 2006:6). In this sense, the body referred to here should not have the task to make all relevant decisions but, instead, to coordinate decisions and actions. Decisions may be varied but through the public discussion and collective appreciation of city marketing mentioned in the previous point, they should be able to fall within the same chosen direction for the city's future. The question of how to achieve this wide participation and cooperation is certainly difficult. For instance, who will participate from an endless list of possible participants and stakeholders? It is, however, an issue that demands extensive attention. The fragmentation of marketing strategies that commonly results from the administrative structures of cities and the lack of coordination lead to inconsistency in policies implemented, which is a determining obstacle for marketing effectiveness. At the same time, special attention needs to be paid to political, ideological, social and ethical characteristics that rule participation in such marketing bodies so that they do not become tools of social control where "dominant groups use visual and spatial strategies to impose their views" (Broudehoux 2001:272).

9.2.3 The need to follow the marketing process

It is vital to approach city marketing as a series of steps that cannot be implemented partially or only to an extent. Marketing is a long term process that consists of several stages, which have been described since the very beginning of theoretical explorations on city marketing explorations (see Ashworth and Voogd 1990). Research and analysis is an obviously important first step of the process; segmentation of the market is also vital for effective targeting of actions; the selection of a vision for the city that will also serve as the ultimate goal of all marketing efforts is also essential. Braun et al. (2003) summarise the various strategic choices that have to be made within an integrated approach to city marketing management, highlighting the fields of product development, market research, market segmentation and target group selection, image management, acquisitions, strategic alliances and evaluation. Furthermore, city marketing does not end with the conclusion of one cycle but goes on to re-examine strategies, redefine goals and reiterate the whole process from the beginning. This understanding is crucial in order to prevent the commonly noticed phenomenon of only developing promotional campaigns and implementing sporadic actions with vague goals. Only then can the

necessary consistency and continuity of marketing efforts be achieved and only then can the full potential of city marketing be reached.

9.2.4 Expansion to other fields than tourism

Currently city marketing and its perceived effectiveness is mostly appreciated in the field of tourism development. But marketing may assist in all aspects of urban development increasing the city's attractiveness not only for visitors but many more target groups and city audiences, starting with its own residents. Perhaps it is the intense communicative character of marketing together with the perceived dependence of travel and destination choices on such communicative elements that mislead city marketing practice. Perhaps also the characteristics of tourism as service provision that makes transferring marketing knowledge from other service industries easier. The fact is, however, that cities are not only tourism destinations and focusing the marketing effort on attracting visitors is dangerously limiting the effectiveness of marketing but also the city's character itself. By focusing exclusively on marketing the city for tourism, the city's form and, more importantly, its spirit acquire a meaning not necessarily according to the aspirations of city residents.

9.2.5 Local Communities

One very important issue that needs addressing is the reaction of the city's own residents to the marketing efforts and messages sent by their city. This is particularly true for city branding, where emotional ownership of the brand belongs to those who have affection to the brand (Balmer 2002). Everything is done in the name of the inhabitants and it is their resources that finance any city marketing programme. Indeed Deffner and Liouris (2005:2) assert the importance of the role of city marketing in that "it forms a bridge between a city's potential and the use of this potential for the benefit of the local society". Local entrepreneurs and small businesses should also be a vital concern, as in many cases they are the economic engines of the city. The significance of local communities in city marketing is not meant here in the same sense as commonly found in the literature, which treats local people as marketing vehicles. As Hudson and Hawkins (2006:175) describe, "...[I]n the evaluation of key stakeholder groups, local communities are very important in that local people can help to set the ambience for visitors as well as acting as credible brand ambassadors for a city". While local people certainly make a difference in the atmosphere of a tourism destination and while their role is crucial in delivering the tourism service, of the essence is that they are both the foremost target group of the marketing effort and, in effect, the most influential city marketers. Insch and Florek

(2008) also suggest that the ultimate goal of places is the welfare and satisfaction of their residents who, in turn, “play an instrumental role in shaping the economic, cultural and social prosperity of a place” (Insch and Florek 2008: 12). In that sense, the needs and wishes of local communities should be integrated in the goals set and they should be participants in all stages of formulating, designing and implementing a marketing strategy. Unfortunately this is not the case in current city marketing implementation. This issue is connected to the popular establishment of Public Private Partnerships as the main vehicles of city marketing implementation. As Holcomb (1999:69) accurately comments, in most cases “public means government leaders (rather than community) and private means business (not the private citizen)”. This has led to strong critical voices against the way in which city marketing and image-making projects “have enabled ruling minorities to use the power of visual imagery and mental associations to determine who will dominate, use, live in and profit from urban spaces” (Broudehoux 2001:276). The creation of a brand for the city is particularly vulnerable to this kind of criticism. A short-sighted branding strategy might indeed encourage spatial and socio-cultural inequalities and segregation (Deffner and Liouris 2005). “Therefore, the process of adopting a brand should be as open to the society as possible” (Deffner and Liouris 2005:4). Future city marketing and city branding application needs to include local communities in all steps of the marketing process to ensure representation of their interests and prevent such criticism.

9.2.6 Competition and cooperation between cities

City marketing is in most cases a reaction to the new conditions under which cities are called to survive and prosper. These new conditions are attributed to global forces and are commonly associated with the increased mobility of capital, the easier relocation of economic activity, the radical development of the knowledge based society and increased global connectivity. This is a matter obviously related to the increased inter-urban competition that is evident in today’s world, also exemplified in the importance attributed to several city rankings that are published regularly. Benchmarking, i.e. the direct comparison with other cities and the way they implement marketing, is also a popular activity in European cities. Competition can, of course, be healthy and in many ways stimulate cities to become more proactive and even more effective in their marketing decisions. One significant issue to examine, however, is the nature of this competition. In most cases, the understanding of inter-urban competition is short-sighted and inevitably leads to an equivalently short-sighted understanding of city marketing. In an explanation of the spatial dimensions of inter-firm competition, Cox (1995) examines a distinction between ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ competition. As Jessop (1998) summarises, “...whereas strong competition refers to potentially positive-sum

attempts to improve the overall (structural) competitiveness of a locality through innovation, weak competition refers to essentially zero-sum attempts to secure the reallocation of existing resources at the expense of other localities” (Jessop 1998:79). Weak competition is socially disembedding, whereas strong competition involves the territorialisation of economic activity (Cox 1995 quoted in Jessop 1998). Weaker forms of competition are usually more concerned with modifications in formal and substantive regulatory, facilitative or supportive measures aimed at capturing mobile investment as well as simple image-building measures with the same purpose (Jessop 1998). Cities engaged in such weak entrepreneurialism are even more likely to fail in the longer term because of the ease with which such activities can be copied (Jessop 1998:79). It is unfortunate that in most cases the weak conceptualisation of inter-urban competition is dominant. Cities have to examine the possibilities and benefits of inter-urban cooperation. A wider conceptualisation of city marketing and, particularly, a thorough market research in the beginning of the marketing process is bound to reveal areas where competitive cities in the same region may complement instead of substitute each other. Moreover, it will reveal opportunities for common projects that will result in widening the market for all cooperating cities and not necessarily struggle to win higher shares of a stagnated market.

9.2.7 Measuring the results

Another issue is the methods that can be used to measure and evaluate the results of marketing efforts. Tourism data alone are not enough to adequately represent the effects achieved or aimed at. Cities commonly rely on various city rankings but the methodology followed and the implicit goals of the organisations undertaking these rankings are doubtful. On the other hand, it is argued that all cities can do is monitor their image and its changes, which might be enough. For instance the thorough following of the marketing campaign of the region of Groningen in the Netherlands (see Pellenbarg and Meester 2005) has been valuable for the region’s authorities and has provided information on the changes of its image and perceptions by the Dutch that have led to refinements of the campaign. Perhaps there is no way to connect the change in the image, the rise or decline of numbers of visitors or the changes in citizens’ satisfaction to the marketing efforts but that is not necessarily a problem and it is what happens in several other marketing sectors. Of course the inability to justify marketing expenses through their financial return remains a problem that should be tackled with the correct conceptualisation of city marketing itself. Interesting in that respect and connecting to the above issue of involving local communities in the marketing and development efforts, is the suggestion of Insch and Florek (2008:2) that “measuring and monitoring resident place satisfaction is an essential performance indicator for city, regional and other territorial authorities”.

The same authors draw on psychology and sociology theories in order to adjust the American Customer Satisfaction Index and transform it into a Resident Place Satisfaction Model, aiming at measuring and monitoring the city's own residents' evaluation of the city they live in and their satisfaction with it.

It is the contention of this thesis that future development of city marketing theory needs to address all those issues further and attempt to identify and suggest effective ways to integrate them in city marketing application. The integration of city branding models attempted in chapter 8 and the new suggestion of sets of city branding elements made in the next section of this chapter is a step towards that direction.

9.3 Towards a new city branding framework?²

The conclusions of the cross-case analysis presented in the previous section are informative of major issues facing the implementation of city marketing and city branding, as well as their further theoretical development. In chapter 8 (see Table 8.1), several city branding models found in the literature were described in order to identify similarities and alignments that lead to their integration. In the light of the extensive literature review and the case-study research undertaken for this thesis, this section attempts a synthesis of the above research conclusions and theoretical suggestions in an order to identify and suggest major components of a new, integrated city branding framework. Eight city branding components are suggested: *Vision and Strategy*, *Internal Culture*, *Local Communities*, *Synergies*, *Infrastructure*, *Cityscape and Gateways*, *Opportunities* and *Communications*. They are presented and explained in Table 9.2.

The above components are proposed here in a manner resembling a city branding process (see Figure 9.1). The process starts with the relevant authority of the city debating and deciding on a certain vision for the city's future (and its brand) and the brand strategies that will best achieve this vision. The brand oriented culture must then be spread through the organisation itself. Local communities must then be involved and mobilised to support the establishment and refinement of the brand vision and strategy. After that, synergies must be found with all relevant stakeholders that will play a role in delivering the brand promise. This promise must be based on the city's infrastructure, its physical landscape and the opportunities it offers to targeted audiences. Finally, all the above need to be communicated and promoted. Two essential elements that need to be evident throughout the whole process need to be highlighted: a) external and internal research and analysis is

² This section is based on part of Kavaratzis 2008

necessary at all stages in order to create and maintain a necessary connection with all relevant audiences and b) strong leadership needs to be exercised in order to guarantee consistency and effectiveness.

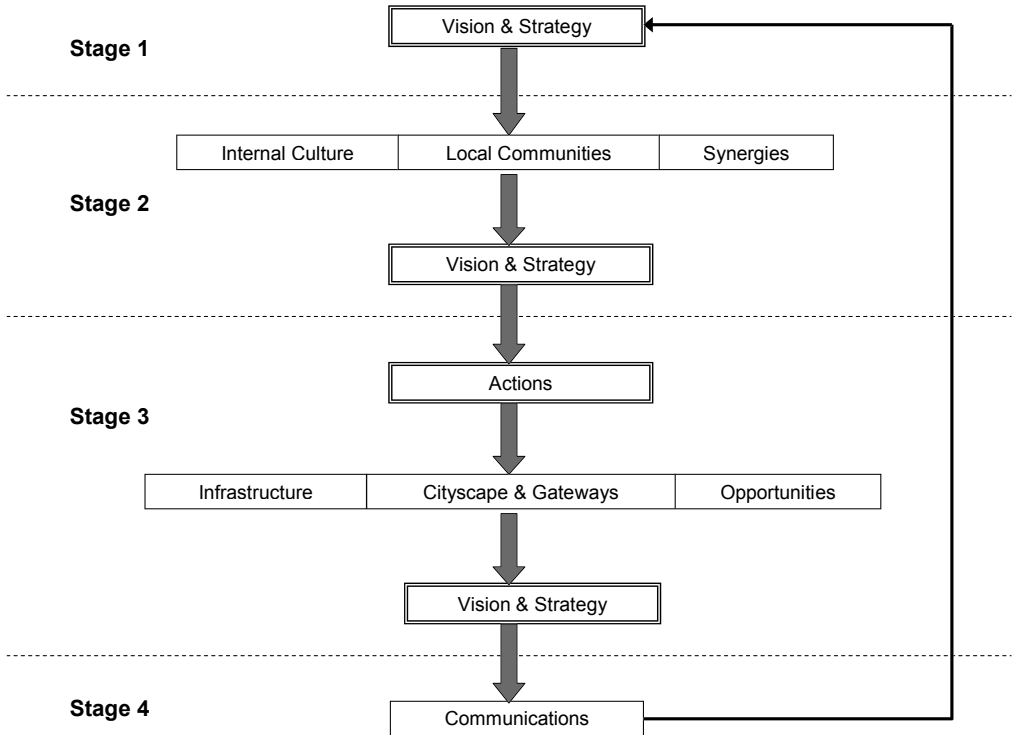
It is worth stressing that the city branding process is not linear. The four stages take place simultaneously and at several levels. The components are interrelated in a complex manner; they interact and redefine each other. This interaction makes the constant monitoring and reconsideration of each component and the whole strategy a necessity and, therefore, an integral part of the process itself. This is demonstrated in figure 9.1 by the appearance of the Vision & Strategy component at the end of every stage. The initial decisions on Vision and Strategy are the result of the first stage, based on market research and the analysis of the city's current conditions. With the input of relevant stakeholders, which is the result of the second stage, the Vision and Strategy are reconsidered and refined. Feedback is also necessary from the actions planned and implemented at the third stage in order to incorporate the success and failure of specific projects. Finally, the evaluation of all promotional measures needs to be incorporated in the strategy as well.

This section has attempted a presentation and an initial integration of existing suggestions on what city-brand-management should include but further theoretical exploration is necessary before a definite, integrated model of city branding can be suggested. Such a model should obviously also be tested for its applicability and practical value. This process can, to a very large extent, be based on the rising concept of corporate marketing, which casts new light to the topic by bringing marketing theories closer than ever before to the needs of cities. This certainly unfolds opportunities for refining city marketing and city branding theory and generates great optimism for the future of these practices.

Table 9.2: City branding components

Component	Need covered	Main axes of intervention and indicative actions
Vision and Strategy	Need for a widely accepted vision for the city's future that will guide all efforts and for a clear strategy to realise that vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public discussion on the city's future and the role of marketing • Market research • Market analysis and segmentation • Choice of vision, target groups and main goals • Establishment of working group(s) • Resources inventory / SWOT
Internal Culture	Need to receive feedback, agreement and support of employees and to spread brand orientation through the city's management and marketing itself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal discussion on vision & strategy • Establishment of appropriate organisational structure • Role allocation for departments • Departmental coordination
Local Communities	Need to prioritise the needs of local communities (residents, entrepreneurs, SMEs, local interest groups) and involve them in the strategy and brand delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public discussion with local communities on vision & strategy • Establishment of local communities' representation and participation in all stages of strategy • Balancing goals with impacts of strategy
Synergies	Need to explore the common ground between relevant stakeholders within the city (local chamber of commerce, trade associations, locally-based corporations) and outside (regional/national governments and associations, neighbouring cities, international level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public discussion with internal stakeholders on vision & strategy • Exploration with external parties of possibilities of cooperation and supplementary efforts • Role allocation for stakeholders and coordination • Planning cooperative projects • Public Private Partnerships
Infrastructure	Need for basic infrastructure necessary for the function of the city as a place to live, work, visit and invest in, highlighting the communicative value of such infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility to and within the city • Housing, cultural, tourism leisure etc. • Existing infrastructure evaluation • Planning and prioritising existing infrastructure improvement and new infrastructure according to vision & strategy • Implementation of projects
Cityscape and Gateways	Need for the brand promise to align with the natural and built environment and for interventions of both functional and symbolic character, particularly (but not only) in central parts and main entrances and corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban design and architecture • Quality of public spaces • Evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the built environment • Planning and prioritising projects according to vision & strategy • Implementation of projects • Flagship developments
Opportunities	Need to provide opportunities to targeted individuals (work, education, services, leisure, lifestyle) and companies (financial, tax incentives, labour etc., consistent with the city's brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and evaluation of existing opportunities • Planning new opportunities provision according to vision & strategy • Implementation of projects • Quality of service provision • Number, type and scale of events organised • Tax incentives for specific sectors
Communications	Need for consistent communication and promotion of existing and new elements of the city and its brand building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving communicative competence of the city • Communicating development efforts • Provision of information to all interested parties • Advertising/Publicity/Public relations • Creation of visual identity (Logo, Slogan) • Promotional material

Figure 9.1 The city branding process



9.4 Some unresolved issues³

After decades of city marketing implementation certain aspects remain, which have not been entirely clarified and which have raised criticism of city marketing and arguments against it. The final part of this thesis addresses some of those aspects, not in the vain hope to solve all issues involved but in an attempt to contribute to the discussion around them. The unresolved issues that will be touched upon deal with the reasons cities turn to marketing, the interaction between marketing, the city’s

³ This section has been published as part of Kavaratzis 2007

image and the city's identity, the impacts of city promotion on urban landscapes and the constantly present confusion of marketing with one of its components, namely promotion.

To start with, it is important to discuss the scepticism with which city marketing is analysed in a large part of the geography literature (e.g. Harvey 1989; Philo and Kearns 1993; Griffiths 1998). As Griffiths (1998) summarises, critical discussion of place marketing strategies has turned around three major themes:

1. their ideological effects: "in the process of re-imagining a city, some aspects of its identity are ignored, denied or marginalised" (Griffiths 1998:53)
2. their socially regressive consequences: "not only does place marketing divert attention away from social and economic inequalities, it can also exacerbate them ...for example through the reallocation of public spending necessary to secure high-profile flagship developments" (Griffiths 1998:54)
3. their highly speculative nature: "investments in major entrepreneurial projects are contingent, for their success, on a multitude of factors over which an individual city will usually have little if any control" (Griffiths 1998:56).

This fair criticism certainly deserves much thought and attention by everybody involved in city marketing theory or practice although all of the above points could be equally valid for many other forms of economic development programmes. Furthermore, it could be argued that they are all arguments against the way marketing has been implemented so far and are not intrinsic characteristics of city marketing itself. The fact is, however, that there is a definite need to critically re-examine issues such as the 'right of entry' into city marketing partnerships and who actually gets it, the implicit goals of certain city marketing programmes and whose interests they actually serve, the distribution of any financial or other profits achieved by such programmes and who actually benefits. Harvey (1989) adds that spatial practices (such as urbanisation and urban entrepreneurialism) acquire definite class, racial, gender and bureaucratic contents. Almost twenty years later, these are issues that have not yet received a satisfactory answer in city marketing literature and practice. Even the strictest critics of urban entrepreneurialism and city marketing, though, have raised the question whether it is even possible for cities to ignore these trends and chose not to take part in them. "Is it not the case that, whatever the risks ...and whatever the dangers... cities are confronted with no real alternatives but to compete with one another in the place marketing game?" (Griffiths 1998:57). No matter what the answer is to the above question, reality shows that cities all over the world do actively chose to engage and invest in city marketing. Then, they should be able to 'do it right'. 'Doing it right' first of all implies an understanding of what city marketing is and how it is done, something that unfortunately is not commonly the case. As already explained earlier, it is important to understand that marketing is a wide set of practices that is not limited to promotional activities and that it is a

process that can not be implemented partially. The second issue that 'doing it right' implies is understanding the environment in which cities operate and in which cities turn to marketing.

In general, city marketing is commonly employed as a response to certain new conditions evident in cities throughout the world; conditions that are thought to be generated by the forces of economic, political and cultural globalisation. They are commonly associated with the increased mobility of investment capital, with the easier relocation of companies, with the decreasing influence of the nation-state, the radical development of the knowledge or information based society and the increased global connectivity. Perhaps it is useful here to mention that some of the reports on globalisation and its consequences are exaggerated. "...[T]he simple picture of globalisation incorporating cities previously untouched by global connections needs to be replaced with a more sophisticated picture of economies and cities being subject to differing degrees and forms of re-globalisation" (Short et al 2000: 319), because cities have been involved in a series of globalisation processes occurring in the last five centuries and "...the city is not simply a passive recipient of global processes (Short et al 2000: 325).

The fact is, however, that these new conditions have caused fiercer competition between urban centres around the world for the attraction of investors, visitors and residents (e.g. Kotler *et al.* 1999). Due to the capacity of the capital to switch locations, all cities have become interchangeable entities, to be played off one against another, forced to compete from positions of comparative weakness for capital investment (Beriatos and Gospodini 2004). "The novelty of the situation and much of the explanation of the relevance of place marketing approaches lies not in the existence of competition as such, but in the abruptly changing rules of the competitive struggle between places" (Ashworth and Voogd 1994). But it could be argued that, in many cases, the understanding of inter-urban competition is short-sighted and inevitably leads or is at least closely related to an equivalently partial or short-sighted understanding and implementation of city marketing (see section 9.2.6). City marketing and city branding need, therefore, to have deep roots in the city's identity and local conditions and characteristics. The conclusion might well be that image-building alone is simply not enough for contemporary city marketing and that current understanding and methods of inter-urban competition need a radical re-evaluation.

The main task of urban governance in this new milieu is the creation of urban conditions sufficiently attractive to lure prospective firms, to attract investments and to safeguard and enhance the city's development prospects (Beriatos and Gospodini 2004). "The criteria for likely success are place characteristics such as environmental quality or, more broadly, the way in which cities are now valued as places in which to live, work, enjoy leisure or invest" (Ashworth and Voogd 1994:40). As Beriatos and Gospodini (2004) demonstrate, in the context of intercity competition and the efforts of cities for a distinctive physiognomy and place identity in the global urban system, built heritage and

innovative design of space represent key morphological means for 'branding' the urban landscape, while McNeil and Tewdwr-Jones (2003) describe how the threatened nation-states use a diverse array of public building projects exhibiting design innovation – from parliament buildings to cultural flagships, conference centres and expo sites – as a source of 're-branding nations'. Behrman and Rondinelli (1992) argue that globalisation puts pressure on cities to develop their specific cultures in ways that attract business, investment and high-tech professionals and that convince their own residents and entrepreneurs to remain. That is the point where city marketing is suggested as an effective way to build upon local characteristics competitive advantages over other cities. And this is where branding is called to the rescue, as the development of a city brand is thought to provide a sense of pride, a conduit for citizens to identify with their city in a way that is based (or at least is supposed to be based) on local distinctiveness and identity.

But is it? How do the contemporary centrality of the city's image and the attempted improvements of the city's image through landscape transformations (Beriatos and Gospodini 2004) affect the urban landscape? As Holloway and Hubbard (2001) suggest, attempts to reverse images of decline go hand in hand with the physical creation of a new urban landscape. The construction and promotion of 'spectacular' new urban landscapes has been an almost universal respond to de-industrialisation and frequently centre on a 'flagship' project, such as a cultural centre, conference suite or heritage-park. Inevitably, this redevelopment and 'repackaging' of urban districts is heavily promoted by urban governors, in effect becoming a representation of the city in its own right (Hubbard 1995). "Here, then we might start to think about the ability of the landscape to act as a representation of itself, promoting particular images of the city through its architectural appearance" (Holloway and Hubbard 2001:167). Indeed, the urban landscape itself sends out the most important messages about the nature of place. "As such, the physical spaces of the city can be considered as belonging to the same set of cultural forms (brochures, videos, guidebooks, advertisements) which promote a partial and selective view of the essence of the city" (Hubbard 1998:200). As partial and selective this view may be, the point made here is that promotional activities are only a small fraction of the whole marketing effort and indeed other measures, such as landscape transformations, have a greater impact on the city's identity, its image and, finally, on the city's brand. This, unfortunately, seems to be the hardest message to get through to most audiences, as the dominant understanding of marketing, perhaps proved by its intense communicative character, is limited to its promotional aspect; a limitation that inevitably leads to mistaken measures and incomplete strategies.

This is reflected on the impacts that all the years of place promotion have had on urban landscapes. In fact precisely this point has been one of the main arguments against city marketing: the 'sameness' resulting from the same marketing methods used and the same marketing goals set in cities all over the world (e.g. Griffiths 1998). At the heart of the matter lies the interaction between

the city's identity and the image of the city that is used in and, at the same time, formed by marketing. Although there is wide agreement that one of the most important assets cities possess is the distinctive and unique local character and identity, the argument is raised that marketing implementation in cities has diminished local identity (Griffiths 1998; Ashworth 2002; Vermeulen 2002). As Harvey (1989:10) predicted "competition may even force repetitive and serial reproduction of certain patterns of development or similar forms of urban redevelopment". The same author identified that "many of the innovations and investments designed to make particular cities more attractive as cultural and consumer centres have quickly been imitated elsewhere, thus rendering any competitive advantage within a system of cities ephemeral" (Harvey 1989:12). The tension gets even higher if the matter of 'image vs. reality' is added in the equation. As Hall (1998:28) identifies, "much academic criticism of place promotion stems from the supposed dualism of image and reality implicated by projects of place promotion. Most severely place promotion and projects of economic development of which it is an integral part, have been labelled the 'carnival mask' of late capitalist urbanisation, the argument being that while such images create the impression of regeneration and vibrancy within cities, they do nothing to address the underlying problems that necessitated regeneration programmes in the first place".

But the above criticism is geared towards place promotion and not place marketing. The answer could exactly lie in the limited understanding of marketing and its confusion with promotion. To make matters worse, it is normally the same attributes, the same icons and the same "...actually quite universal vocabulary of better, bigger, more beautiful and so on" (Philo and Kearns 1993) that are included in this promotion. As Barke and Harrop (1994:99) state, "...despite attempts to create a distinctive image for places, no authentic sense of place is likely to emerge from the advertising copywriters. This is all the more likely if the packaging and the type of content is uniform". Holcomb (1994:121) develops the argument that "the marketing of cities tends to be generic and repetitive". This conclusion is, unfortunately, as valid as ever in contemporary city marketing practice, despite the years of experience and the accumulated knowledge. Marketing is still confused with promotion, branding is confused with the creation of logos and, furthermore, it is almost identical messages that cities are trying to send to their target-markets. All European cities claim to be the capital of something, all cities somehow lie in the heart of Europe, all cities want to be the cultural centre of their wider region. But how many capitals and how many cultural centres can fit in a single continent? A wider view of city marketing would accommodate different messages sent, would involve several channels of direct and indirect communication and would allow for more creativity in transforming local assets and local characteristics into real competitive advantages and real city landmarks.

Initially, the use of marketing in general within cities and planning was considered by some a paradox which lay "...in the fact that planning, as an activity practiced in local authorities, came into

existence in order to prevent the worst excesses of the ‘market’ from dominating urban development, yet in place promotion, planners are in effect whole-heartedly embracing the market” (Barke 1999:490). By now, however, it should have become clear that this is not an inherent characteristic of city marketing. First, city marketing is not necessarily ideologically oriented towards the dominance of the market. City marketing and branding do not have an inherent ideology; the people who use it do, and they use both to reach their own ends. “Branding, like any other tool, is itself ethically neutral: it is the use to which the tool is put that determines whether it complies with such strictures or not...” (Anholt 2006b:2). Secondly, the realisation has come that for most urban authorities, external markets are likely to be, in reality, of minimal importance compared to internal. In fact, “... it may be as much about communication between citizens as clients and public authorities as service providers as about attracting exogenous investment, employment or customers. A place is sending messages to itself. The purpose is the fostering of a civic consciousness and self-confidence. This is both an end in itself and a necessary precondition for external marketing” (Ashworth 2001). Evidently, and luckily, this realisation is spreading and as Barke (1999:493) contentedly concludes , “...in many places and in various forms, city marketing is currently being used as much to serve the specific purposes of local authorities and indigenous populations and businesses as to present an appealing, but possibly superficial, external image.”

9.5 Concluding Remarks

This thesis started with the history of city marketing. It proceeded by demonstrating the gradual shift towards city branding based on the importance of the image of the city and then elaborated on the nature of city branding. The three case studies were described highlighting several issues important in current understanding and implementation of both city marketing and city branding. It then revisited the theory of city branding shedding more light on the relevance of corporate level marketing constructs and suggesting a list of significant components of city branding after an integration of several existing models found in the literature. In the last chapter the cross-case conclusions were presented, which together with the elements suggested in chapter 8 were used to form the basis of a new, integrated city branding framework. The thesis ended with a brief discussion of some of the remaining unresolved issues around city marketing and city branding.

City marketing has strongly manifested itself throughout the last decades and it can now be viewed as a fundamental part of guiding urban development. One look only at the earliest promotional posters of the first episode described in the first chapter of this thesis and a comparison with certain more refined and better targeted contemporary campaigns reveals the progress made in

city marketing implementation. From the fragmentary and sporadic activities of the past, we have now moved to an age of orchestrated efforts and strong public-private cooperation. Clearly however, as stated in the last part of this thesis, there is still a long way to go until a wider understanding of city marketing's potential is achieved and a more integrated and holistic approach is adopted.

City marketing suffers from a paradox. Its practice evidently remains trapped in a limited understanding and a short-sighted application, which apart from limiting its effectiveness also provoke a strong and largely justified criticism against the (sub-) discipline. However, since the pioneering work of Ashworth and Voogd (1990), there exists a series of publications (which are repeatedly referred to here) that not only argue for correct city marketing but also suggest concrete ways for its implementation. At the core of correct city marketing lies consumer orientation, which is fundamentally relevant to cities and the way they are run simply because everything in a city exists and functions for the use and benefit of its consumers. Correct city marketing does in no way serve the interests of already privileged elites. It is not the fault of the discipline if, so far, marketing has been used to that end but of the people who put it to that use and of the rest of us, who allow them to do so. Correct city marketing does in no way deprive funds that could be used for more important problems. On the contrary, correct city marketing sets out to identify the important problems and deal with them. Correct city marketing and city branding is in no way a triumph of image over substance. Correct city marketing is dependent on images (and brands) only because the city's consumers (all of us) understand the city through images. Correct city marketing indicates the inseparability of substance and image and explicates how it is in fact the substance that sends the key messages through which the image is formed.

This thesis attempts to, hopefully, find its place within the series of publications mentioned above. Others will judge whether it will. Correct city marketing, however, should certainly find its place within cities. It is the responsibility of all interested in this growing and promising field or, indeed, in the future of our cities to ensure it does.