

Interpreting place branding and its significance in sustainable development

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by:

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April, 2010

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine the place brand construct and to establish its role in the sustainable development of a place. This research reviews the evolution, development and effectiveness of the place branding concept from the perspectives of regeneration, growth and sustainability. The main research focus is on establishing key facets responsible for driving the brand of a place and examining the relationship between them in terms of achieving sustainability.

The primary theoretical background and concepts in place branding consist of commonly used branding terminologies and place marketing theories (nation branding, destination branding and city marketing approaches). It reviews the need and emergence of place branding, its implementation and influence.

This research takes an interpretivist approach emphasising that the study is more open-ended and seeks to understand the complexities involved in the process of place branding by using a qualitative research strategy using semi-structured interviews in order to ensure robust theory development. A place-specific branding campaign (using the Liverpool'08, European Capital of Culture status) was considered and data collected from the key stakeholders in Liverpool. The resulting interview transcripts were subject to both First and Second cycle coding methods to generate subsequent categories and themes.

Convergent techniques and theory saturation were used to confirm data, and finally, advanced modelling techniques were introduced using CAQDAS (NVivo) to develop the relative interrelationships from which the importance of place brands and their role in sustainable development emerge.

This research contributes to the developing literature by generating 'relationship-modelling' between the key place-specific concepts, and produces theoretical frameworks to understand these relationships. These include new models of the place branding construct itself, the interrelationships between stakeholder groups, the role of mega-events in the place branding process and the importance of place branding in sustainable development.

It is proposed that these frameworks can be generalised to other places.

This research also makes a managerial contribution by giving recommendations for generalised and enhanced place branding practices and by developing a new and analytical agenda to help places generate sustainable future growth.

Key words: place branding, place marketing, sustainable development, brand creators, brand drivers, place-specific facets.

Acknowledgements

The printed pages of this dissertation reflect the culmination of a long journey that had lots of high and low moments. At times, it has been very demanding and there were moments when the end seemed to be no way near, however, the unselfish support, motivation and encouragement of a number of individuals made this journey enjoyable and achievable for which I express my gratitude.

First and foremost, I would like to express my warmest appreciation to my primary research supervisor, Dr. Ian Vandewalle, Liverpool Hope University, without his initial interest and guidance; this research would not have commenced. His personal commitment, professional support and clear vision guided and encouraged me throughout this research. He has the attitude and the essence of a genius, which convincingly motivated me at all times, while undertaking this research. Ian's way of providing instructions and advice has been phenomenally inspiring and enthusiastic, maintaining a good balance between criticism and encouragement, which has been constructive in my development as an academic researcher. His approach of clarifying minute details in terms of grammar and language and simple academic interpretation of visionary research developments has remarkably improved my research writing skills. Moreover, attendance and presentations at a number of national and international conferences would not have been possible without Ian's support and guidance both academically and financially. I am grateful to Ian for having confidence in myself and giving me this wonderful opportunity and unforgettable experience of academic research.

I would also like to thank Dr. David Bamber, Liverpool Hope University, my secondary supervisor, for his invaluable support and guidance to carry out this research. David played a role of a critical friend throughout this research, applauding every new development and achievement, while at the same time, continuously questioning my interpretation to achieve rigour by pointing out potential gaps and missing information. His can-do attitude, outstanding research intellect, interest in the area and friendliness made a significance difference to the completion of this research. His professional support, friendly and persistent help motivated me in difficult times when I struggled to put things together during the study.

I am also very grateful to Professor David Walker, Birmingham University, my tertiary supervisor, for his interest, dedication and involvement to this research. His advice, comments and insights have been tremendously useful throughout the research. His expertise

within Marketing and Business Management field played a significant role in the structuring of this research.

I thank Dr. Rob Harris from Wolverhampton Business School, University of Wolverhampton and Dr. John Brinkman, from Liverpool Hope University's Hope Business School, in kindly agreeing to act as my thesis examiners. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Professor David Weir from Hope Business School, Liverpool Hope University, and Dr. Chris Bamber to act as an informal internal verifier of this thesis. Their comments were extremely valuable.

I would like to thank Hope Business School, Liverpool Hope University for giving me this wonderful opportunity by sponsoring me to undertake this research and providing all the required facilities. I am grateful to staff in Faculty of Business and Computer Sciences at Liverpool Hope University for their excellent individual support throughout this research. Special thanks goes to Jane Blackmore in Resource Management and Planning office for her outstanding support and promptness in arranging meetings with Dr. Ian Vandewalle, sorting out conference administrations and other research-related arrangements. I would also like to thank Andy Smith, Tracy Guy and Robert Smith in Reprographics at Liverpool Hope University for providing their expertise in printing, binding and making graphical arrangements while putting together manuscript for this research.

I am also very grateful to all my interviewees who have devoted their time and effort for this research. I hope that the results of this research will be useful for their place branding practices and pioneering sustainable development facets in Liverpool.

I am also very grateful to the technical support that I have received from my colleagues Dilbag Sokhi, Abbas Gullam, Chris Evans and Ashutosh Sharma. I would like to thank Jan Brown, Senior Lecturer at Hope Business School, Liverpool Hope University for her constant peer support in clarifying any marketing research related issues.

Finally, this research would not have been possible without the priceless support and endless encouragement by one individual over last 3 years; my wife, Jigna Maheshwari. She has been my real strength and it was her belief and patience that fundamentally assisted me in completing this journey by overcoming all the challenges. I dedicate this research to my family; my beloved wife; and my late grandfather.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Background research

There has been a steady increase in competition between places in terms of attracting tourists, businesses and investments, which was first noted in early nineties (Kotler, *et.al.* 1993). This has made the marketing of places a key driver of the economic activities and a leading initiator of local development and regeneration. As a result, '*Place Marketing*' has become a regular and more intense practise over the last few decades as a result of the rapid increase in competition between places, cities, regions and nations around the world (Baker and Cameron, 2008). Moreover, place marketing is not only limited to increasing the tourist trade but also plays an important role in regional and urban development, place and/or country positioning in international relations and maintaining continued infrastructural and economic growth.

However, there is little academic research to support the practise. Indeed, '*Place Branding*' is seen as an emerging field (Hankinson, 2001, Kavartzis, 2004), in which there is an apparent lack of empirical research (Caldwell and Freire, 2004) and little clarity or agreement about terminology and definitions (Anholt, 2004). According to Placebrands, (2006) place branding brings together a range of existing specialisms, in particular those of brand management and corporate branding, general management and marketing concepts, together with developmental policy, to create a new discipline with equal emphasis on visionary strategies and hands-on implementation.

Branding within the context of tourist destinations apparently started to gain visibility in 1998 "with destination branding [as] the focal topic at that year's Travel and Tourism Research Association's Annual Conference", (Blain, *et.al.* 2005). However, places using events such as arts or sports led initiatives to regenerate and re-brand themselves has been well documented (Rowe and McGuirk 1999, Garcia 2004), with examples such as the Football World Cup, Olympic Games, Europe Capital of Culture and American Capital of Culture. Mooney, (2004) believes that "*culture* has become central to urban regeneration programmes throughout Europe", whilst Garcia (2004:313) stated that "*the principle of 'arts-led' regeneration was explored in US cities in the 1970s and consequently developed with a wider cultural remit, in European cities*".

However, whilst there has been some academic research into the branding of places as sustainable centres for business tourism (Hankinson, 2004), there has been a little focus on the place branding concept itself, and no research on place brand and sustainability.

1.2 Research purpose

This research sets out to investigate the construct of place branding and its impact on the continuous development and sustainable growth. This research will consider the evolution and the liminalities of the place branding construct and will explore the role and importance of the various place-specific facets embedded in it. Finally, the research will consider the conceptual models which focus on the impact of place branding and its relationship with sustainable growth.

This research will be of benefit since it will not only offer new academic insights into place branding and its role in sustainable development, but it might also assist brand developers and policy makers in designing place brand strategies and for future research purposes.

In relation to this, key assertions outlined below set the foundation for this research:

- Very little research to date into place branding (Hankinson, 2005; Anholt, 2005; Kavaratzis, 2007): the construct is little understood and its relationship to product brands and corporate brands is yet to be fully elucidated.
- Most research to date is focused on destination branding from a tourist perspective (Papadopoulos, 2004; Dinnie, 2004) and there is very little on place branding or place brand management.
- No contemporary research into the impacts of place on regional or local development or on the sustainability of place brands.
- This is surprising and this gap in the research to date is, arguably, a serious omission.

Therefore, the main purpose of this research is to provide new insights to the existing knowledge of place branding and its importance in terms of sustainability. The first part of this research reviews the relationship between city branding, place and destination marketing literature primarily, to be fully versed with the current knowledge of place branding and secondly, to identify and illustrate the gap in literature about place branding and its importance. Furthermore, this research also focuses on differentiating place branding from

the existing knowledge of destination branding and marketing, tourism and place marketing - places just targeting the leisure and business visitors rather than residents, employees or investors. It also seeks to identify key constructs that contribute towards place brands.

This research also seeks to establish the importance of place branding in enhancing and sustaining continual development of the place. This research will contribute to the emerging literature, developed in the context of destination branding and marketing and to adapt it to the practice of place branding and its importance.

1.3 Research question

Research questions generally flow from research generated ideas after thoroughly reviewing the literature (Saunders, *et.al.* 2007). However, lack of clarity in specifying research questions may lead to unfocused research (Byman and Bell, 2007). Therefore, research questions are crucial, as they guide decisions of selecting the appropriate research design, implement suitable data collection and analysis methods and further inform writing up the discussion of the research findings.

This research poses the following questions:

The main focus of this research is:

“Interpreting place branding and its significance in sustainable development”

However, the principal research question was explored through the following questions:

- What constitutes the process of place branding and what is the role of a place branding campaign?
- What are the key facets that comprise the place brand and what are their relative roles?
- Who is responsible for place branding and how is this coordinated?
- Does place branding enhance sustainable development and if so, how?
- Does sustainable development enhance place branding, and if so how?

1.4 Research aim and objectives

1.4.1 Aim

In order to fulfil the main purpose of this research derived in sub-section 1.2, and answer the main research question (see sub-section 1.3), this research aims to:

“Investigate place branding, determine and model its key facets and establish its role in sustainable development and future growth prospects of a place by developing a conceptual framework?”

1.4.2 Objectives

Objective 1: To undertake an extensive literature review to gain a comprehensive understanding of the nature of place branding and its evolution. This will also review the relationship between destination branding, nation/country branding, place marketing and place branding. See Chapter 2, 3 and 4.

Objective 2: To identify and establish the key constructs that have influenced or contributed towards place branding. This objective will be achieved in two ways: firstly, the literature review will guide the researcher and help to identify the key players in place branding and secondly, through participant interviews, re-evaluate these constructs and identify those facets playing an important role in determining place brands. See Chapter 4 and 7.

Objective 3: Establish the significance of the role of brand creators and brand users within place branding. This objective will be achieved by analyzing relative responses recorded at research-participant interviews. See Chapter 7.

Objective 4: Develop conceptual-relationship models that describe the interaction between the key facets and dynamics of place branding. These will then be explored in detail using the modelling function of the qualitative analysis software (NVivo) to generate relationship and interactive models demonstrating the role of place branding and its facets. This is critical to the creativity and new theory development for place branding research. See Chapter 8.

Objective 5: Investigate the importance of place brand identity in sustaining continuous development and regeneration. This objective will be achieved through critical analysis and discussion of the relationships between place branding, its facets and sustainable growth prospects. This should further extend our understanding in establishing key aspects of sustainable development for a place. See Chapter 7 and 8.

The overview of each the Chapter (2 to 9), as stated above, is presented in section 1.6 of this chapter.

1.5 Research Focus – Framework of research

It is clear that this research aims to establish the role of place branding in sustainable development and therefore the scope of this research has been focused via the research criteria (1.1), the purpose of research (1.2), research questions (1.3), research aim (1.4.1) and objectives (1.4.2). The following Table (1.1) summarizes the research focus of this study:

Table 2.1 Summary of the research focus

Research dimension	Selected focus
What kind of research context?	Place and/or city undergoing re-branding and re-positioning
Place location and aspect?	The ‘City of Liverpool’ and its branding ‘Liverpool’08’ campaign
Key research target?	Brand creators and Brand drivers
Theoretical approach?	Deductive initially followed by Inductive
Philosophical orientation?	Interpretivist and Constructive
Methodological approach	Qualitative content analysis
How is the analysis carried out?	Using CAQDAS - NVivo

Source: Rainisto, (2003)

As a result the key focus of this research is to investigate the evolution of place branding and its role in the development and regeneration of a place. From the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, 3 and 4, place branding practices have become quite common recently and have been applied to a number of locations that include nations, destinations, cities, regions and places. However, this research, in particular, focuses on a place and its ongoing branding and re-positioning campaign in order to examine the application of place branding in terms of sustainability (Rainisto, 2003).

Bearing this in mind, the decision was made to follow a place-specific approach to carry out this research by studying the branding campaign undertaken by the ‘City of Liverpool’ using European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2008 as the rebranding initiator.

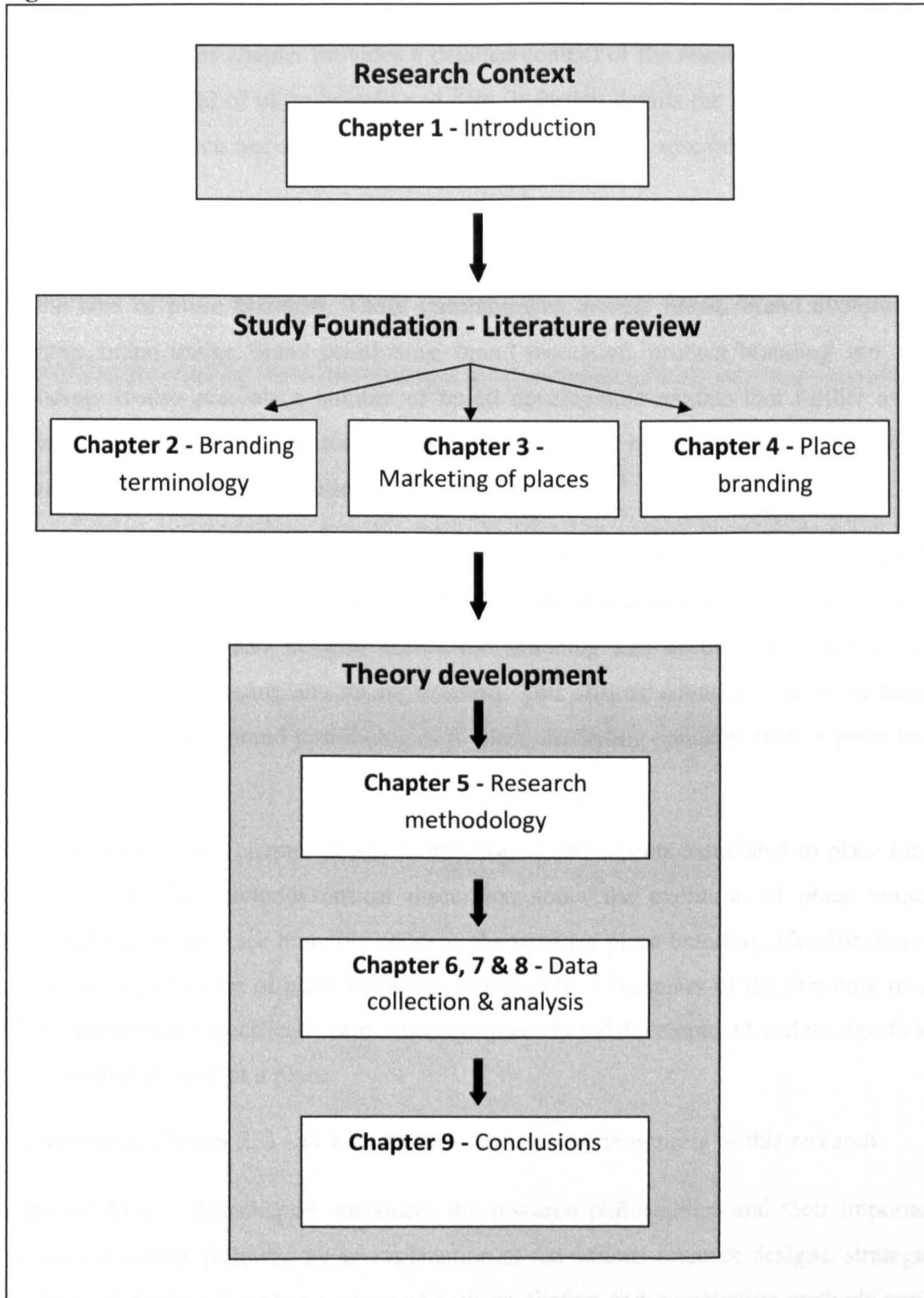
Furthermore, this research follows an inductive approach in order to explore the area of place branding with an aim to generate new knowledge, however, it also implements a deductive approach in terms of exploring the existing knowledge of place marketing and branding (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Also, in terms of philosophical orientations, the researcher stresses that, as the subject of place branding and its role and importance in sustainable development, in particular, requires the in-depth understanding of the behaviour of various social actors for example, the key stakeholders and governing authorities, involved in creating, developing and using the place brand, as a result, this research project considers a philosophical orientation that follows an '*interpretivist*' (Thorpe and Holt, 2008) approach, complimented with an epistemological position of '*constructivism*' (Flick, 2009) through the implementation of ideographic methodology (Hermans, 1988).

Finally, because the literature on place branding is not yet rich enough, as mentioned in the literature review chapters (2 to 4) to provide a sound and/or concrete conceptual foundation for investigating place brand, an exploratory qualitative research study (Robson, 2002) is carried out to investigate first, facets of place branding and their importance and second, to establish the significance of place branding in sustainable development by identifying a range of causal relationships of those facets that a place may possess. This research considers a single place-specific approach with an aim to develop a new theoretical framework for successful place branding that can be generalized to other places with similar place-specific facets. Moreover, considerable attention is given to the managerial implications through the contribution of knowledge to existing place branding theories that can eventually fulfil the needs of its multiple brand creators and users.

1.6 Structure of the research

The following Figure (1.1) summarizes the structure of this thesis.

Figure 2.1 - Structure of the research



Source: Rainisto, (2003)

This research is presented through a total of seven chapters as shown in above diagram.

Chapter One – this chapter provides a detailed context of the research through background research in the field of place branding to date. It further details the purpose of this research followed by research questions, research aim and objectives, research focus and structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two – this chapter describes various branding terminologies and definitions related to the area of place branding. These terminologies include brand, brand evolution, brand identity, brand image, brand positioning, brand reputation, product branding and corporate branding. It also presents a number of brand development models that further assists our understanding to the specific role of these closely-knitted brand terminologies. This chapter in particular provides a foundation to the study.

Chapter Three – this chapter outlines a range of concepts associated with the marketing of places. This involves exploring the relationship between country-of-origin branding, nation branding, country brand images, destination branding and destination brand image, city branding, place marketing and its applications. This chapter advances our understanding of branding from basic brand terminologies to place marketing concepts from a place branding perspective.

Chapter Four – this chapter details terminologies and aspects associated to place branding, in particular. This includes critical discussion about the evolution of place brands, the development of the place branding concept, the need for place branding, identification of key facets, the significance of place branding, followed by a summary of the literature reviewed. This chapter looks specifically into aspects of place brand development and its significance in the continual growth of a place.

Furthermore, Chapter 2, 3 and 4 forms the theoretical underpinning of this research.

Chapter Five – this chapter introduces the research philosophies and their importance in business research, followed by an explanation of the various research designs, strategies and methods. It further describes a range of both qualitative and quantitative methods applied to place branding research and their influence to this research. Finally, it outlines the rationale for selecting the relevant method to carry out this research and details correspondent sample selection.

Chapter Six – this chapter describes data collection approaches, data recording, coding techniques and its interpretation, respectively.

Chapter Seven – this chapter draws out an analysis of the data and discusses the importance of this research.

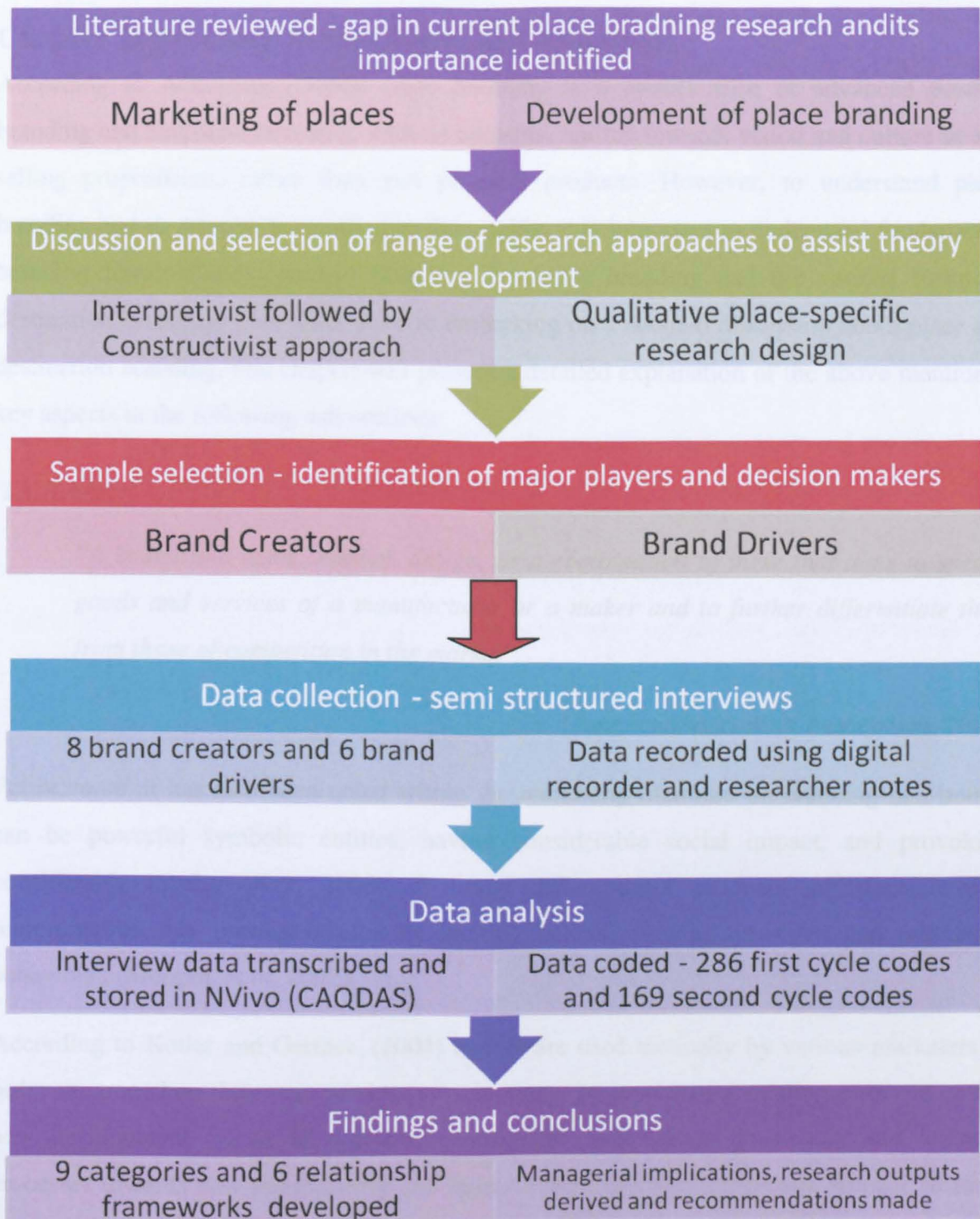
Chapter Eight - this chapter provides a detailed discussion of results and findings of data collected and analysis, followed by presentation of conceptually related models.

Chapter Nine – this chapter provides a conclusion to the research by presenting a summary of the research results and demonstrating new theoretical insights (together with managerial implications), drawing attention to the limitations of the research and suggesting future research directions and relative recommendations.

Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 form the basis of theory development of this research.

Following Figure (1.2) shows the research plan for this research:

Figure 1.2: Research plan



Literature Review

Chapter 2: Branding terminologies and definitions

According to Ackerman, (1998) place branding is a modification of advanced product branding and corporate branding, with its epicentre shifted towards vision and culture as key selling propositions, rather than just physical products. However, to understand place branding and its relative terminologies thoroughly, it is important to understand fundamental branding terminologies, product branding, corporate branding and the various forms of destination branding. Therefore, prior to embarking on a detailed discussion about place and destination branding, this chapter will present a detailed explanation of the above mentioned key aspects in the following sub-sections:

2.1 Brand

“A brand is a name, symbol, design, or a combination of these that aims to specify goods and services of a manufacturer or a maker and to further differentiate them from those of competition in the market”

(American Marketing Association, 2007)

Furthermore, it has also been noted within the marketing literature on branding that brands can be powerful symbolic entities, having considerable social impact, and provoking considerable loyalty (Kay, 2006). A brand differentiates products and formulates a representation that promises value by inciting beliefs, evoking emotions and prompting behaviours (Morgan, *et.al.* 2002).

According to Kotler and Gertner, (2004) brands are used tactically by various marketers in order to strengthen their new product introductions, by associating existing goodwill to the new development, so as to accelerate consumers' information processing and learning processes towards new products. By and large, brands effectively represent specific features of a product and its added values, characteristics of service-specific processes and peculiar features of certain events which may be functional or representational. Moreover, brands suggest and guide consumers to the best choice (Ginden, 1993); while, on the other hand, brands also act as familiar constructs that a consumer knows and will react to (The Economist, 1988). In addition to this, by using a particular brand, a consumer can strengthen a positive image that reduces the risk of buying something that is very little or scarcely

known (Ginden, 1993). Eventually, the main aim of this exercise is to build a strong product or a concept image in the market, which then will influence the perceived worth of the product or concept and will increase the brand's value to the customer, leading to brand loyalty.

According to O'Malley, (1991) branding is a technique to build a sustainable, differential and unique advantage by playing on the nature of human beings: only human beings, through their ability of emotional brand associations, can attach meaning and feeling to inanimate objects and a random collection of symbols, which suggests the appeal of branding, is not entirely rational (Elliot and Percy, 2007).

Therefore, once consumers become accustomed to a certain brand, they do not readily accept substitutes and this is what organisations look to target so as to acquire increased market share. The main purpose for the creation and development of a brand is to establish a distinct identity for a product in relation to how the product is perceived by the consumer (Betts, 1994). As a result, most of the brand owners or corporate organizations develop brands as a way to attract and keep customers by promoting value, image, prestige, or lifestyle.

This research will essentially adopt the de Chernatony and McDonald's (1998: p.25) definition of a successful brand because it effectively incorporates the aspects of place as brands and its sustainability, along with products and services:

“a successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added values which match their needs most closely, furthermore, its success results from being able to sustain these added values in the face of competition”

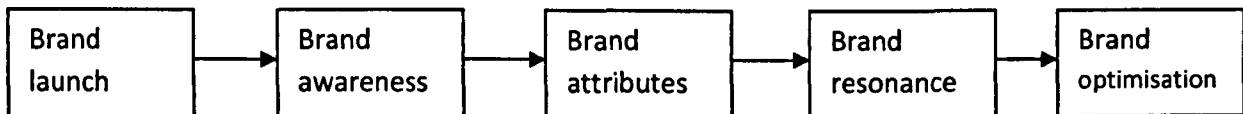
To reinforce the understanding of the above definition, they further stress that successful brands are precious because they ensure long-term income streams. Moreover, brands exist in both product and service domains, and also have been extended to include people such as media stars, and to cities and places, for example, the marketing of cities and places as tourist destinations (de Chernatony and McDonald, 1998). Furthermore, a brand when used in terms of place branding can be identified as a consistent group of distinct characteristics, images, values or emotions that consumers recall or feel about when they think of a specific place or a location (Simeon, 2006).

The success of a brand depends on its absolute concordance with the targeted segments of the market (de Chernatony and McDonald, 1998). Brands are also assessed in terms of satisfying the rational and emotional needs of consumers, for example, consumers try different brands (prototypes), examine packaging, shape and size, often consider pricing in order to assess the extent of satisfaction of particular rational needs, and on the other side they seek to assess the extent of satisfaction of their emotional needs through brand esteem, distinctiveness, style and societal value.

2.2 Brand evolution

It is critically important to implement the correct procedures at the initial stages of brand development, for example during the early stages of brand launch (de Chernatony and McDonald, 2003). This is to ensure that accurate brand growth is achieved beyond mere representation of its physical characteristics. Furthermore, to achieve optimised brand development, a newly launched brand needs to develop an appropriate amount of awareness for potential customers to use it, enhancing development of positive attributes of its value and quality features; and further increasing resonance within customers (Gordon, *et.al.* 1994), as shown in following figure 2.1:

Figure 2.1: Brand evolution model



In this context, de Chernatony, (2006) suggests that the long-term success of any brand depends on the strategic planning behind it regarding what that brand's core values and peripheral values are. Moreover, as the former stays consistent (regardless of external market environment), the latter could be amended upon change in external environment, to facilitate the brand to make required adaptations. Moreover, Kunde, (2000) found customer's involvement key to a brand's successful evolution and suggested that this can only be achieved by developing stronger brand values that are more relevant to customers.

Keeping the above discussion in mind, it can be established that emergence of brands and appropriate branding process, are necessary for successful marketing and market communication (Stigel and Frimann, 2006). Brands further facilitate reduction in risk (Keller, 1993): where there is a perceived risk associated with product purchase, a brand can reduce

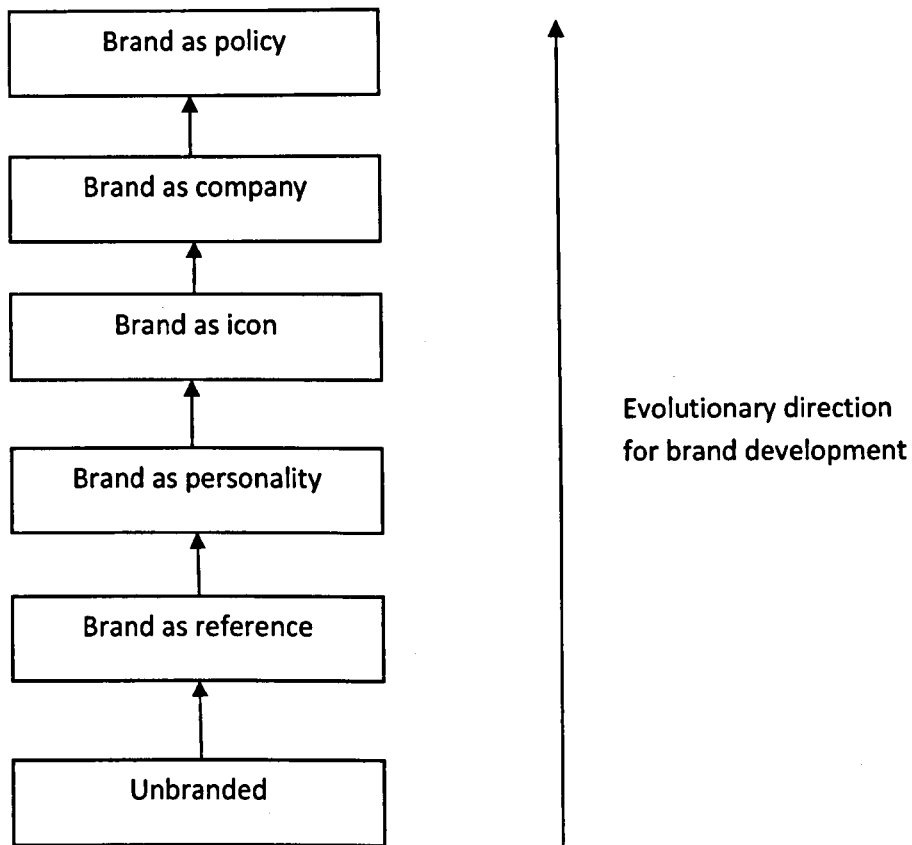
this risk with its distinctive and identifiable features. The development of a brand and its perceived attributes can be monitored by the emergence of metrics such as brand identity (Kapferer, 1997), brand positioning (Ries and Trout, 1992) and brand image (Aaker, 1996). These brand development metrics are discussed in detail in the following sub-sections of this chapter.

2.3 Brand development models

Although the main purpose for the creation and development of a brand is to establish a distinct identity for a product or a service in relation to how the product is perceived by the consumer, but it also enables it to highlight the sustainable advantage of the product (Doyle, 1987). Furthermore, the brand development emphasizes the 'differential' and 'sustainable' components of the products that enable a product to distinguish itself simultaneously from the competition and provide an effective entry barrier to existing and potential competitors (Betts, 1994).

In this context, Goodyear, (1996) suggests a need for understanding 'consumerization' that characterizes the degree of dialogue between marketers and consumers, prior to developing brand building strategies. In addition, she identifies a chronological brand development plan known as 'brand consumerization spectrum' as shown in the Figure (2.2) that categorizes brands from merely known to progress at the highest level to take up the role as a reference for quality, seeking to compete against more intense competitors by understanding consumer's emotional needs, enabling the brand to grow into its role of projecting a particular personality:

Figure 2.2: Brand consumerization spectrum

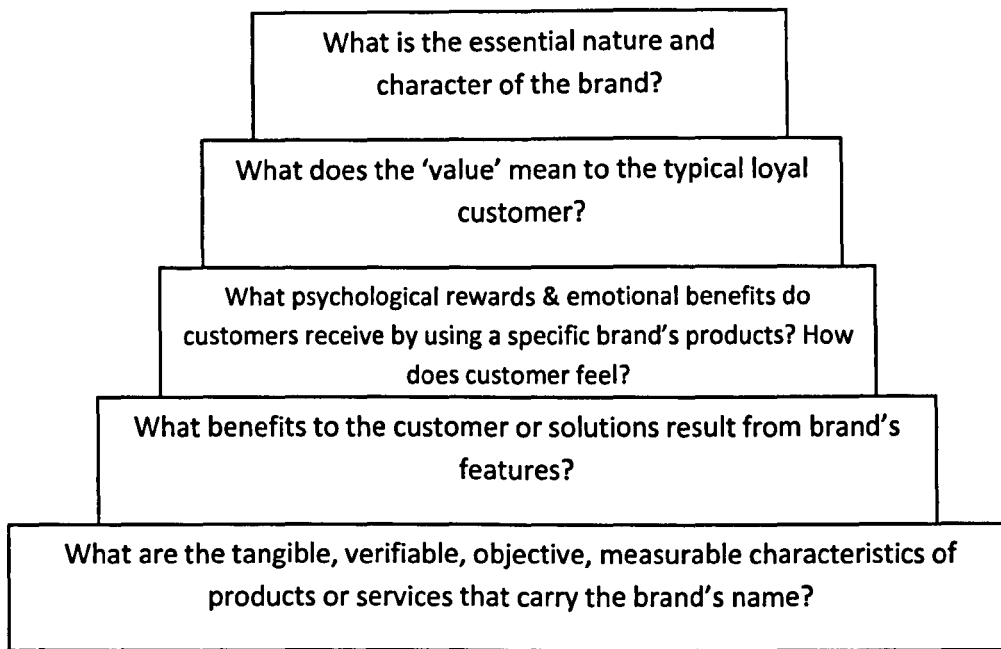


Source: Goodyear, (1996)

Moreover, the brand consumerization assists a brand to develop into an icon, as a result of a closer and long-lasting relationship with consumers and highly appealing symbolic characteristics. However, these icons need to be continually revived; otherwise they fail to maintain their premier positions (de Chernatony and McDonald, 2003).

Ward, *et al.* (1999) suggested that the credibility of the brand's assurance depends upon persistence and consistency in its delivery in terms of technological innovations or superior service and customer support; if this can be achieved, a significant competitive advantage can be prevailed. Further to this, Ward, *et al.* (1999) showed how to develop a powerful and high-tech brand through a brand pyramid as shown in Figure (2.3).

Figure 2.3: The brand pyramid

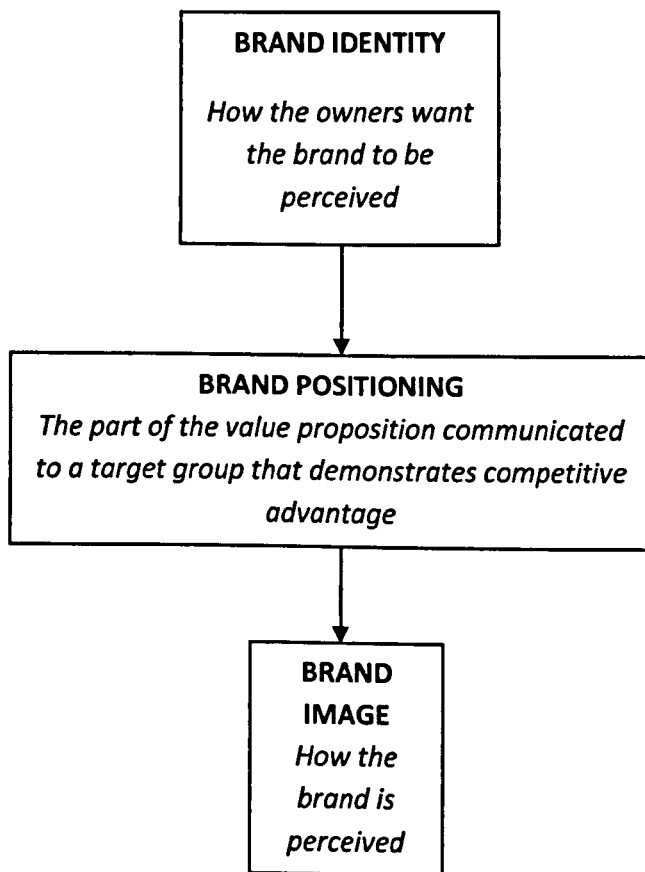


Source: Ward, et.al. (1999)

The first two stages of the pyramid represent the elements of the product competition, rather than of brand competition. However, if the brand raises its offerings into stage three, emotional associations and rewards can offer competitive advantage. The top two stages of the pyramid represent the stages reached by the more powerful and strong brands, where they are recognized in terms of personality and values.

Furthermore, marketers may choose to extend emotional, symbolic and social values, thus creating a unique brand identity (de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998). However, these perception-specific aspects are not enough to construct a brand, as the brand further relates to the quality and values as perceived by the consumer. This concept of value proposition communicated effectively to potential consumers demonstrates competitive positioning of a brand, while the centre of consumer's perception towards a brand is brand image, which incorporates perceptions of quality and values as well as brand associations and emotions (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006). Following Figure (2.4) shows the relationship between brand identity, brand positioning and brand image.

Figure 2.4: Relationship between brand identity, brand positioning and brand image

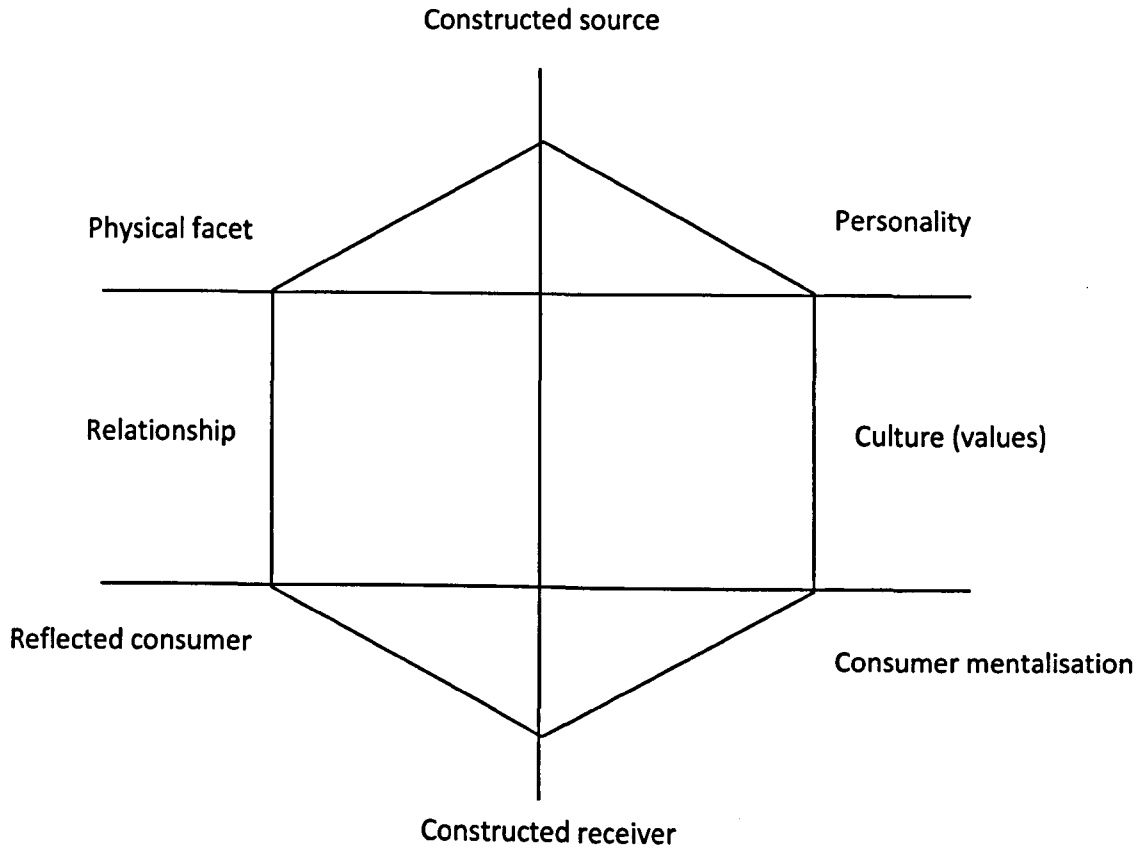


Source: Kavaratzis and Ashworth, (2006)

2.4 Brand identity

Brand identity provides clear direction, realistic purpose and meaning to a brand (Kapferer, 1997). He further explained that a brand communicates meaning and defines the identity of a product which is initially designed or expressed by marketers but ultimately resides in consumers' minds (Keller 1998; de Chernatony, 2001). Moreover, brand identity is an effective tool that allows developing confidence in consumers' minds and providing long-term credibility and trust to the product, company and its brands (Farrell, 2008). However, Kapferer, (1997) argued that there is an emergence of new age of brand identity, shifting its focus from the traditional 4p's approach to more comprehensive six variables: physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and consumer's self image as shown in the Figure (2.5) below:

Figure 2.5: Kapferer's brand identity prism



Source: Kapferer (1997)

The top two variables in above Figure (2.5) 'physical facet' and 'personality' resembles the symbolization of a brand, while the variables 'relationship' and 'culture' in the centre represents functionality of a brand and finally the bottom two variables 'reflection' and 'consumer's self image' suggest judgmental attributes of a brand. Furthermore, Azoulay and Kapferer, (2003) suggests that physique is the fundamental facet of brand construction, while, the personality facet provides character to a brand. The cultural facet defines basic principles governing the brand in terms of products and communication, while, brands are termed as relationships, especially, in services marketing, where they provide a platform for intangible exchange between the manufacturer and the customer. Finally, a customer's image is reflected in their brand-buying decisions, while, the consumer's mental image is a brand's perception framed in the mind of a customer.

In contrast, Godheswar, (2008) suggests brand identity is a specific set of brand associations reinforcing a promise to customers and includes a core and extended identity. Core identity is the central, timeless essence of the brand that remains constant as the brand moves to new

markets and new developments. Core identity broadly focuses on product attributes, service, user profile, and performance. On the other hand, extended identity is woven around the brand identity elements, and is then organized into cohesive and meaningful groups that provide brand texture and the required finishing. The extended identity therefore focuses on brand personality, relationship, and strong symbols for example, associations and emotions. In addition to this, brand identity is the uniqueness (in signs and symbols) of a particular product that makes a consumer remember or re-visit its brand (Macre and Uncles, 1997). Uniqueness, however, can be elusive - it is hard to achieve and even harder to protect and sustain this recognition. However, a brand identity needs to resonate with customers, differentiate that particular brand from its competitors, and represent what the brand can and will do over time (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000).

On the other hand, Hatch and Schultz (2003), suggested brand identity to be a distinctive or central idea of a brand and how a brand communicates to its stakeholders, which is in sharp contrast to that of the brand as a 'legal instrument' or 'logo', since the emphasis is on the brand as a holistic entity. Furthermore, de Chernatony, (2006) asserts that regarding brand as a 'logo' leads to almost a checklist mentality towards the elements necessary to create a brand, whereas an emphasis on brand's identity encourages a more integrated thinking about brand positioning and its image.

Furthermore, developing brand identity is a key factor for successful brand building practices for brand creators, as it facilitates the understanding of what the brand stands for, and to effectively express that identity to its customers (Aaker, 1996). Moreover, Schmitt and Simonson, (1997) note that those brands that present a cohesive, distinctive, and relevant preference in the marketplace, add value to their products and services, and will command a price premium too.

It has been noted that brand personality and reputation help distinguish it from competing offerings, when the brand faces aggressive and strong competition in the existing marketplace, resulting in gaining customer loyalty and higher growth rates (Godheshwar, 2008). A strong brand identity that is well understood and experienced by the customers helps in developing trust which, in turn, results in differentiating the brand from competition. In addition, the brand needs to establish a clear and consistent identity by linking its attributes – be it functional or emotional, with the way they are communicated that can be easily

understood by the customers. Summarizing this, a positive brand identity helps brands to strengthen brand equity, which eventually results in acquiring a highly loyal core of consumers (Elliot and Percy, 2007). Brand identity is equally important in place branding: establishing a positive identity is fundamental in order to develop the brand resonance and brand associations and thereby generate place brand loyalty

2.5 Brand positioning

Ries and Trout, (1982) identified brand positioning as a simple analogy that suggests how a brand is determined in the minds of the consumer with respect to the values with which it is differently associated or which it 'owns'. The aspect of brand positioning has become a key element of marketing practices within last few decades. Positioning becomes essential as the consumers are overloaded with a continuous stream of advertising of products with identical features, and because of this distinctive position of a brand proves to be a catalyst differentiating these identical characteristic products in the customers' mental map of the market (de Chernatony and McDonald, 2003). Therefore, the more distinctive a brand position, with favorable perceptions that the customer considers important, the less likelihood that a customer will look for a substitute.

As a result, a brand's positioning outlines what that brand is, who it is for and what it offers: it is very difficult to alter a consumer's impression once it is formed (Rositer and Percy, 1997). In the same way, brand positioning is an important element in place branding whereby creating a clear positioning strategy is essential in order to establish exactly what the place stands for and what it offers its various stakeholder groups.

2.6 Brand image

Brand image can be defined as the perceptions involving both the functionality and the emotions of a brand as reflected by the brand associations held within consumers' minds (Keller, 1993). These associations can be a direct experience with the product or service or from secondary information sources such as television, newspaper, advertisements, and others or from inferences to pre-existing associations or relationships (Martinez and Pina, 2003). Positive brand image can only be developed in consumers' minds after the successful creation of positive brand associations, which they can always refer back to. Furthermore, Stigel and Frimann, (2006) found that consumers of specific brands are particularly interested

in the relationship between their intended value acknowledgment to the identity of that brand and its image.

However, in terms of destination brand image, studies can be traced back to the influential work of Hunt (1975) who examined the role of place image in tourism development. Brand image is an essential part of developing strong brands (Aaker, 1996; Kapferer, 1997), since a strong brand differentiates a product or a service from its competitors (Lim and O’Cass, 2001). According to Dobin and Zinkhan, (1990) brand image is the most important aspect of consumer/buyer behaviour, as it reduces the search costs (Biswas, 1992), minimizes perceived risks (Berthon *et al.* 1999), satisfies functional and emotional needs of the consumer (Bhat and Reddy, 1998) and indicates the high quality of the product/service (Erdem, 1998). Brand image is a multi-dimensional construct (Martinez, *et. al.* 2008) consisting of functional and symbolic brand benefits. It has been noted that brand image has been a strong interest area of tourism research, and destination image, in particular, as the tourism industry continues to expand and develop on a larger scale (Hankinson, 2004).

2.7 Brand reputation

Brand reputation is a comprehensive composite of all previous transactions over the life of a brand, a historical impression, and requires consistency of a brand’s actions over a prolonged period (Herbig and Milewicz, 1997): it represents the brand’s ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders. Furthermore, Farrell, (2008) suggests that a brand with a high level of positive reputation proves to be highly successful, renowned and profitable. Therefore, brand reputation is dynamic in nature and prone to change over time, and is a function of time. Furthermore, buyers tend to use brand names as signals of quality and value and often shift to products with brand names they have come to associate with quality and value (Moorthy, 1995). Brand names can often be repositories for a firm’s reputation: high-quality performance on one product can often be transferred to another product via the brand name.

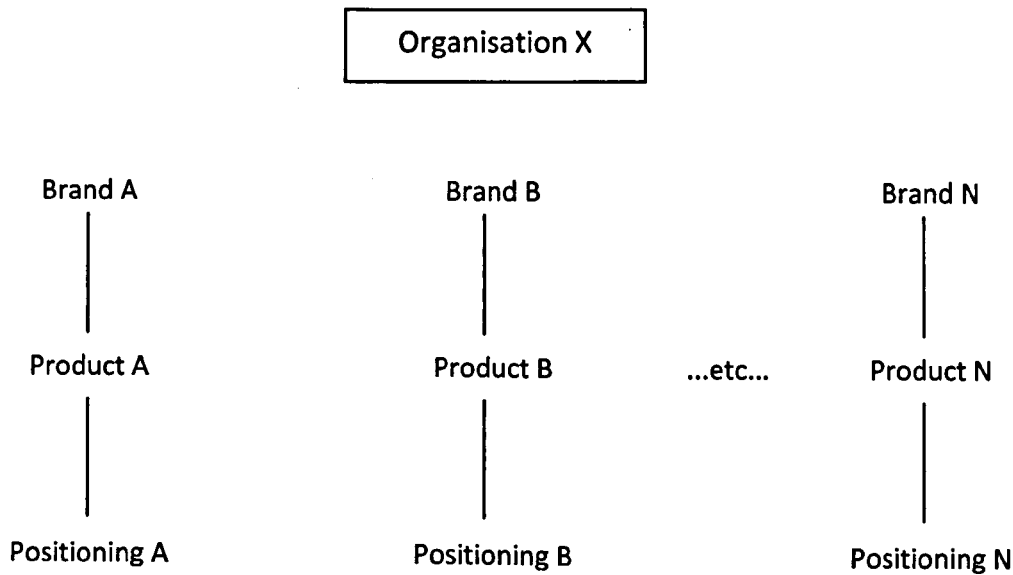
According to Herbig and Milewicz, (1997) the stronger the competition the better the power of reputation for a brand is demonstrated, for instance, when the competitive products all look alike or cannot be differentiated, for example, commodities, similar goods or services, a brand with a higher positive reputation stands out of the group. A successful new product should always offer users a significant point of difference in terms of both ‘credibility’ and

'value'. This point of difference applies equally well to places in order to signify the *uniqueness* in terms of its offerings such as infrastructure, logistics and technological advancement, tourism and leisure provisions and thereby create a superior brand, which in turn enhances the brand reputation (Stock, 2009). Therefore, the development of the traditional product management brand has been the increasing influence of the organisation behind the brand, and an increasing acceptance of its role in the creation of economic value and high credibility (Knox and Bickerton, 2003). In addition, Keller and Aaker, (1992) also mention the importance of corporate branding on new product launches and overall product branding. Both product branding and corporate branding and their relative importance in place branding research are discussed in following sub-sections of this chapter.

2.8 Product branding

Product branding is most commonly defined as a process that consists of any name, design, style, symbols or words in any combination that differentiate one product from another. Furthermore, the role of branding a product and its subsequent brand management is primarily to create differentiation and preference in the minds of customers, as every year, new powerful brands emerge in the marketplace to capture strong sales and customer loyalty (Xie and Boggs, 2006). The development of product branding over the past few decades has been built around the core role of maintaining differentiation in a particular market (Knox and Bickerton, 2003). To be specific, product branding involves the assignment of a particular name to one, and only one, product as well as one exclusive positioning (Kapferer, 1997), providing each product with its own brand name that belongs only to it. Therefore, organisations and authorities following this strategy then have a brand portfolio which corresponds to their product portfolio as shown in Figure (2.6) below:

Figure 2.6: The product-branding strategy



Source: Kapferer, (1997)

The above figure clearly suggests that product brand is also flexible, allowing firms to position and appeal to different segments in different markets. However, a challenge with product branding is that targeting of different small segments through different brands can result in high marketing costs and lower brand profitability (Xie and Boggs, 2006). In terms of branding places, it is clear that marketers involved in place marketing strive to develop a specific and more distinctive identity for a place (Cova, 1996). They attempt to differentiate the place from the competition and attempt to provide re-assurance that it possesses superior qualities, and finally, create lasting images that correspond to the objectives of the place (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006). Therefore, clearly demonstrating that the identity, differentiation, personality and thereby positioning at a competitive platform are all transferable aspects as long as the implications of this transfer is carefully understood. As a result, places can be branded as products if their essential and distinctive features as place products are understood (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006). This will be further discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

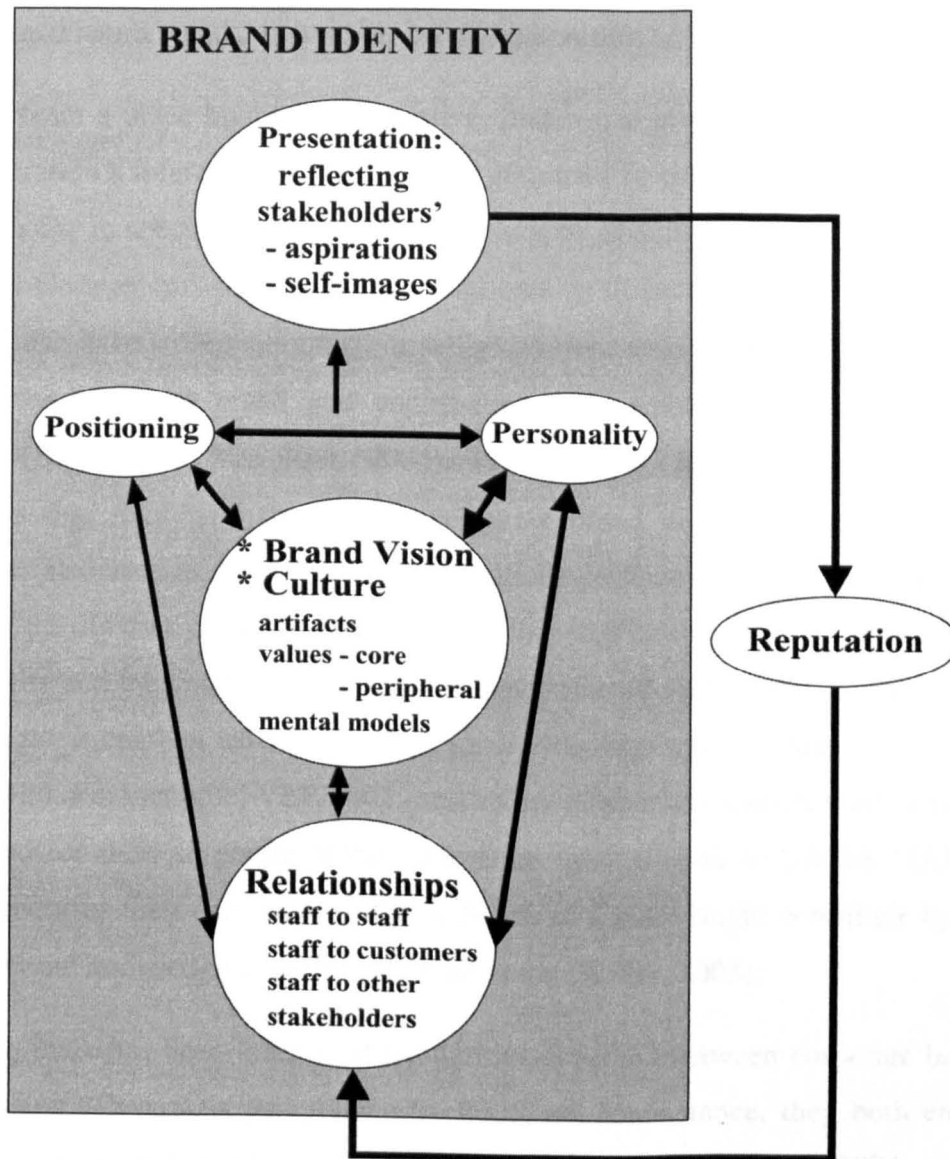
2.9 Corporate branding

The concept of corporate branding is defined by core values shared by different products with a common and overall brand identity, which play a decisive part in coordinating the brand-building process (Urde, 2003). In addition, corporate brands help in providing credibility in

cases such as communications with government, the financial sector, the labour market, and society in general. According to Knox and Bickerton, (2003) corporate branding builds on the tradition of product branding, seeking to create differentiation and preference. However, corporate branding is conducted at the level of the firm instead of the product or service, and furthermore extends its reach beyond customers to stakeholders such as employees, customers, investors, suppliers, partners, regulators and local communities (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). As a result, the values and emotions characterised by the organisation become key elements of the differentiation strategies, and the corporation itself moves centre stage. Furthermore, corporate brands better support product brands in enhancing the firm's visibility, recognition and reputation to a greater extent (Balmer and Gray, 2003).

Therefore, corporate branding becomes essentially part of company's strategic vision and needs to integrate more with its brand building agenda (de Chernatony, 2001), which is where effective brand management becomes necessary. Brand management is when all members of an organisation behave in accordance with the desired brand identity. The following brand management model, as shown in Figure (2.7), suggested by de Chernatony, (1999) outlines the process of narrowing the gap between brand identity and its reputation.

Figure 2.7: The brand management model



Source: de Chernatony, (1999)

The above figure indicates that the vision of a brand remains the central component of brand identity as it provides the clear sense of direction about how it is going to lead to future prosperity. To bring in this foresighted future, depends on a cultural shift within the staff with particular values, and managers with common goals, working closely together about how the market works and therefore how the brand must be developed. The core thinking behind the brand development can now be transferred to positioning of the brand that manifests functional values and establishes its personality which, in turn, brings emotional values to life. Furthermore, the above model also emphasizes the multi-dimensional nature of the

corporate branding concept, which involves the coordination of internal resources to create a coherent brand identity and a favourable brand reputation.

Moreover, from a place branding perspective, places can provide instant associations for a corporate brand (Kapferer, 2004); places and countries in particular are related to different levels of quality in specific categories. So for instance, Spanish cars have moderate perceived quality, but German cars have high perceived quality (Riezebos, 2003). On the other hand, places can also have strong emotional or self-expressive associations and content that can be linked to the corporate brand and contribute to the emotional dimension of corporate reputation (Berens and Van Riel, 2004). For example, Jamaica reminds soft paradise associations that reinforced the PUMA corporate brand in the Olympic Games and the country was also used as a sub brand for a range of perfumes; PUMA Jamaica, launched at the time of the 2004 Olympic Games. A strong link to a place can also reinforce a corporate brand identity and the quality perceptions of its products (Aaker, 1996). In addition, a link to a place might strengthen association with quality through various degrees of endorsement (Uggla, 2006). For example, VERSACE creates complimentary quality associations for their watches and for their corporate brand through an inherent link to SWISS MADE through Ebel that endorses their expensive watches. A link to a place might contribute by expanding consumer brand knowledge with the corporate brand (Keller, 2003).

As a result, there has been a range of similarities observed between corporate branding and place branding (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006) so, for instance, they both endeavour to address multiple stakeholders (Kotler, *et.al.* 1993; Hankinson, 2004), both have multidisciplinary roots (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990), both have high level of implementation and practicing complexities (Hankinson, 2004), both need to take into account social responsibility (Trueman, *et.al.* 2004), and both deal with multiple identities due to the highly varied target audiences (Dematties, 1994; Skinner and Kubacki, 2007). However, it is very difficult to measure these similarities and even more difficult to accommodate in the applications of place branding (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006). Therefore, this research attempts to investigate the complex, but interesting, characteristics of place branding before considering the role of place branding in sustainable development, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter discussed basic brand terminologies which are essential in order to understand the importance of branding and brand development. According to the definitions and discussions in this chapter, a brand is identified as a consistent group of characteristics, images (Kavartazis and Ashworth, 2006), reputation (Farrell, 2008) or emotions (Martinez, *et.al.* 2008) that consumers recall or experience when they think of a specific symbol, product, service, organization or location. Brand recognition occurs when consumers generally know brand qualities (Godheswar, 2008). This chapter also outlines the role of product and corporate branding and their relationship in terms of branding a place. Finally, this chapter sets up the foundation for the following two chapters: the first of which provides specific discussions about conventional ways of marketing places followed by the one that details the emergence, development and significance of branding a place for sustainable growth.

Chapter 3: Marketing of places

3.0 Introduction

Place marketing has become a regular and more intense practise over last few decades as a result in the rapid increase in competition among places, cities, regions and nations around the world, particularly for inward investment, residents, income from tourism and for new business start-ups and relocation (Baker and Cameron, 2008). Moreover, place marketing is defined as a strategic planning procedure undertaken by a place's brand developers with the main aim of satisfying diverse needs of target markets (Kotler, *et.al.* 1999).

The marketing of places is therefore a key driver of the economic activities and a leading initiator of local development and regeneration. As a result, place marketing is not only limited to increasing tourist arrivals but also plays an important role in regional and urban development, place and/or country positioning in international relations and sustainable infrastructure growth to continuously boost the economy.

This clearly indicates a need to reflect on the definition of place marketing proposed by Kotler, *et.al.* (1999) and draw out a planned guidance for place marketing. This needs to satisfy both internal and external stakeholders and further enhance the core activity of promoting the place's image proposition to a wider audience by designing the appropriate marketing mix that highlights community features and services, provides attractive incentives for potential customers and investors; optimises the delivery of a place's products and services and promotes the distinctive image of the place that effectively incorporates its values. In this context, the following Figure (3.1) proposed by Kotler, *et.al.* (1993) shows the interdependence of developing a place marketing plan through mutual coordination between policymakers of a place using marketing elements insitu to target a wider market.

Figure 3.1: Levels of place marketing



Source: Kotler, et.al. (1993)

An important aspect of the marketing and branding innovations within places, regions and nations has generally been the economic development. However, the past few decades (and predominantly the last two), has seen a few places shifting their focus from a rather narrow view of economic development to a broader set of objectivist strategies and plans. These aim to attract new businesses, strengthen old and local businesses, develop international trade, build tourism and target key national and global investors from outside the locality (Kotler, et.al. 1993). Furthermore, some places have transformed their informal economic campaigns into highly targeted, stylish and classy marketing strategies aimed at building competitive markets within diverse consumer segments, targeting specific buyers, and positioning the community's resources to respond to specialized buyer needs and desires.

Many places around the world want to grow by enhancing the physical outlook with modernised infrastructure and hi-tech facilities, continuous efforts to develop economic sustainability, and developing a premier place brand image, so as to be the first to attract the

buyer groups that can bring in new opportunities, prosperity and create a positive brand image. However, places need to be considered in their approach to distinguishing their target market, since growth cannot happen without careful planning and efficient decision-making while selecting the target consumers.

In order to clearly understand the concepts of place marketing and place branding, it is important to disaggregate the marketing of places into aspects of Nation Branding, Country-of-Origin, Destination Branding, City Marketing and Place Branding, and other associated terms (Hanksinson, 2004; Kotler and Gertner, 2004). These will be discussed in the following subsections of the chapter as follows.

3.1 Country-of-Origin

Kotler and Gertner, (2004) suggested that Country-of-Origin (CoO) has become an important element of the extrinsic sources (along with price range, brand name, packaging, and manufacturer) which are often used as a guide for product and service evaluation by a potential customer. This contrasts with identifying other intrinsic qualities (Liefeld *et al.* 1996) and specifications of the products such as its make, design, composition, style, colour and workmanship. Moreover, CoO is also used as a top information indicator, about the quality of the product, for example, research into factors influencing a newer target audience, carried out by Khan and Bamber, (2007) among elite Pakistani consumers, found CoO image as one of the distinctive attributes in decision making. It has also been shown that simple manipulation of CoO (Made in Label) could influence consumer attitudes towards the purchase of particular products or brands (Liefeld, *et. al.* 1996; Papadoupoulos and Heslop, 2000; Li, *et. al.* 1997).

In business terms, the CoO can be defined as the country where the corporate headquarters of the company marketing and promoting the products and services or a brand is located (Johansson *et al.* 1985). Arguably, it is more difficult to define the CoO in today's widely expanding and progressively global markets due to widespread growth of multinational companies and the resultant evaluation of hybrid products (Al-Sulaiti and Baker, 1998), having varied manufacturing and production components from many source countries.

Moreover, the CoO image, as an important determinant of product or service brand image, has been extensively investigated in international marketing literature (Li, *et.al.* 2000), and

furthermore, there seems to be a general agreement that there is a significant connection between country image and brand image (Kim and Chung, 1997). However, the causal nature of this relationship is not explicit. Several countries have followed the path of first enhancing the image of their brands in the host country and then using that to later bolster the country image (Paswan, *et.al.* 2003). In this context, the following sub-sections discuss Nation Branding and Country Branding in detail.

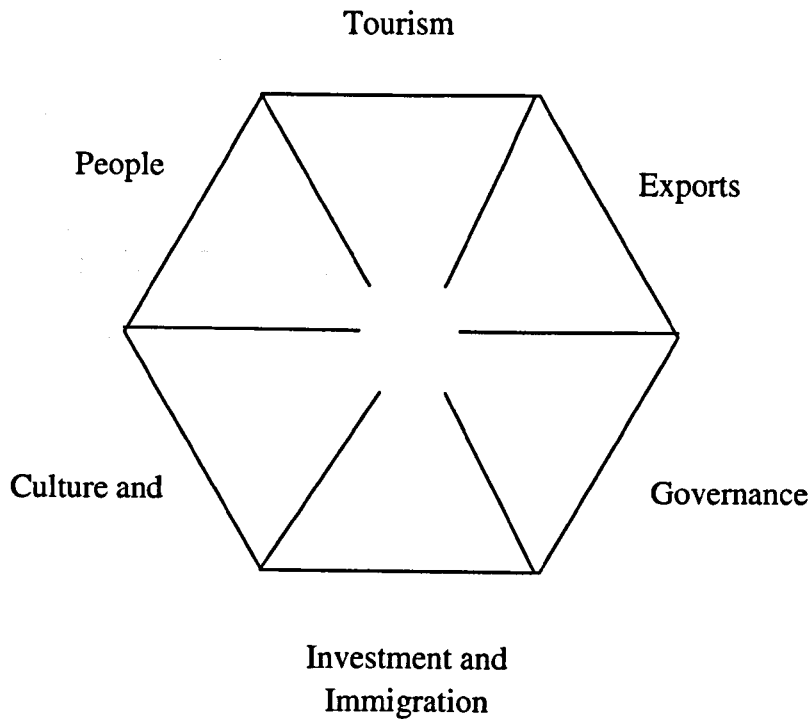
3.2 Nation Branding and Country Branding

Nation branding is a contentious concept that has been subject to heated debate between brand developers, branding practitioners on one side, and policy makers on the other. Originally, the idea that countries and nations behave as brands was dismissed in the past, but is now gradually becoming accepted by most marketers and policy makers (Anholt, 2004). It recognises that a Nation Brand enhances the prospects of a place (i.e. nation or country) in the global marketplace and helps in creating a positive image to counter the economic and political ills that may exist (Anholt, 2006). Furthermore, it has been pointed out that associating country names to the brands, not only adds to the value of the latter, but also helps consumers to differentiate between various products and its prototypes; and influence them to make their decisions of selecting a nation or a country (Shimp, *et.al.* 1993). This clarifies our understanding of how countries can position themselves in the global competitive marketplace in order to boost exports, inward investment, tourism and cultural aspects. Furthermore, they are responsible for associations that may add to, or subtract from, the perceived value of a product.

In addition, investors perceive countries as brands rather than a holistic entity, while choosing a suitable place to invest, thus nation branding has also influenced the movement of international capital to a great extent, (Pantzalis and Rodrigues, 1999). Thus, they claim, brand positioning and brand management (where the brand is the country) becomes critical in attracting global capital and also affects decisions such as how and when capital and investments are withdrawn from a country in economic and financial crisis. In this context Anholt (2000) has developed a nation brand hexagon (as shown in Figure 3.2) that combines the more immediate perceptual components of a nation such as culture, people and exports – (which de Chernatony (2006) redefines as what the place is known for) with less immediate

perceptual aspects such as tourism, governance, and investment and immigration, as the essential elements of nation branding.

Figure 3.2: Nation brand hexagon

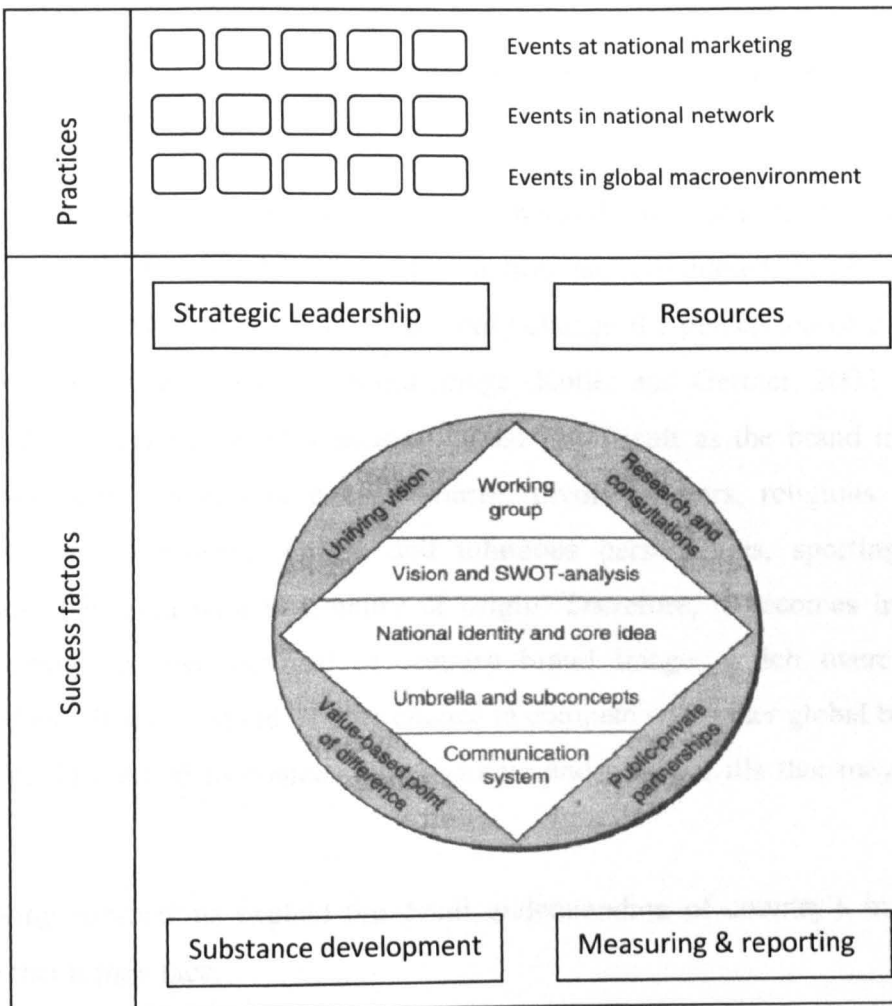


Source: Anholt, (2000)

Moreover, nations also compete with other nations on a regular basis due to the competition to acquire limited funds and investments that exist in the global market place, forcing them to manage, update and control their brand portfolio (Porter, 1998). The countries need to adopt strategic management tools and proactive brand development aspects in order to maximise tourism, increase industrial trades, business development and growth, the immigration of a skilled workforce, and to find markets for their exports (Kotler and Gertner, 2004). Strategic place marketing enhances a country's position in the global marketplace; however, it also requires understanding of the environmental factors that may affect marketability, i.e. strengths and weaknesses of the country to compete with other nations, such as the size of the local market, access to regional trade areas, community awareness and overall education of the citizens, social welfare, income growth, skilled labour and safety issues (Kim and Chung, 1997).

This has been reinforced by the introduction of a framework of success factors of ‘Country-branding’ developed by Moilanen and Rainisto, (2009) which suggests that a nation can increase its profile in the target markets by outlining a strong country brand, thus highlighting the nation’s identity that in turn, can attract higher investments and enterprise businesses, talented workforce, retain self-belief and civic pride in residents and strengthen the interests of the export industry, and visitors for business and leisure purposes. The following Figure (3.3) displays above model:

Figure 3.3: Framework of success factors of country-branding



Source: Moilanen and Rainisto, (2009)

The above framework clearly shows that a unifying vision, commitment and leadership from regulating bodies, mutual partnerships and coordination, continuous research and consultations is critical, together with a value-based point of difference in marketing

evaluation, for a nation and/or a country brand to succeed for long-term growth and development (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009).

Adding to this, the external environmental aspects such as understanding the dynamism of opportunities and threats and competitive forces, should be continuously monitored. The process must involve various stakeholders of the country's brand ranging from government and legal authorities to citizens and businesses, working collaborately towards a shared vision and objectives, setting up and delivering the benefits and controlling the factors that may drive place buyer's decisions. In contrast, opinion-makers from almost all scales of politics and societies have expressed their antipathy and distain when country branding is seen to be apparent and superficial; only when they do not seem it to be working appropriately when implemented generally (Anholt, 2004).

However, even these perceptions can be changed, if accurate interventions, clear understanding and effective branding of a nation are considered, while planning for a country's future development. This will not only change the perception of a nation but also enhance the positive aspects of its brand image (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). Changing the global or external perception of a nations' brand is difficult as the brand image has often evolved over many decades or even centuries, involving wars, religious and customary beliefs, culture and history, famous and infamous personalities, sporting legacies and disasters, all embedded with its country of origin. Therefore, it becomes imperative for a nation to create its own national or country brand image, which overcomes negative attributes, if any, if it is to stand a better chance to compete with other global brands, and help creating a healthy brand to counter the economic and political ills that may exist (Anholt, 2004).

The following subsections explain the detail understanding of country's brand image and challenges that it may face.

3.3 Country brand image

Kotler and Gertner (2002) in Morgan and Pritchard (2004) argue that images associated with a country name can be re-activated in the consumer's mind by simply voicing it or even by a slight mention of it thus, country brand image may form even when a country does not consciously manage its name as a brand. Consumer's decisions associated to immigration,

investments, and travel and purchasing, to a great extent, are influenced by country images. Country image can therefore be understood as:

“...the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places. Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amount of data about a place”

Kotler *et.al.*, (1993) in Morgan and Pritchard (2004; 42)

A country's brand image puts together pieces of varied information about the nation in one place and further represents a simplified form of large number of associations (Kotler *et.al.* 1993) connected with the place. Further to this, an image is more than just a belief. For example, the belief that Thailand is a country often associated with *sex tourism* and *prostitution* would be only one element of a larger image of this nation (Nuttavuthist, 2007); other elements might include a country of incredible beaches and trademark locations to explore (especially for western holidaymakers), its warm weather throughout the year, a place that is technologically advanced and is superior in fashion. Therefore, an image of a country or a nation is a whole set of positive or negative beliefs and associations that exist in people's minds.

Kotler, and Gertner, (2002) further propose that the place's image takes shape as a result of an individual's mind trying to process information that has been gained from various sources about a place, associating it with the existing beliefs and impressions of the place that is already being possessed. In this context, there is a possibility that two individuals possess the same images of a country but may have a different attitude towards it when it comes to make a selection or a choice of consumption, depending on the associations that they have made with a country's image. On the hand, Anholt, (2004) believes that perceptions towards a country's image can change rapidly and even completely at times, as a result of intensive place branding and promotional advertising campaigns.

3.4 Destination branding

A destination brand is defined as:

“...name, symbol, logo, word or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of destination experience”

(Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998:90)

Pike, (2005) pointed out that the evolution of destination branding literature is relatively recent with the first book publication in 2002 and first journal articles appearing in late 1990s and suggested the incongruence between the lack of literature and the notion on the other hand, that destinations are arguably the travel industry's biggest brands. As a result, it has become more important than ever before for a destination to develop as an effective brand as there is an ample availability of destinations that can be chosen by travellers. In addition, it is even more difficult for a destination to develop an 'appealing' or 'meaningful' brand due to the increased awareness and resources for travellers, while making a choice, such as the internet, word of mouth, advertising and marketing campaigns, considered by destinations to keep up the pace with the competitive market. This makes it essential to develop a simple, efficient and clear destination branding approach that not only differentiates a particular destination in terms of its offerings from others, but also facilitates further place brand development, and strengthens place brand reputation.

With an increasing shift towards choice of a destination, in terms of its intangible attributes, such as lifestyle fulfilment and long-lasting memories of pleasure, made by the tourists (Lim and O'Cass, 2001), branding a destination in terms of intangible attributes rather than recognizing differentiation of the more tangible elements of destination such as accommodation and attractions (Morgan, *et.al.* 2004), is perhaps the most effective marketing tactic available to contemporary marketers.

Further, Pike (2005: 258) suggested that *branding destinations is more complex and challenging than mere products and services for the following reasons:*

- 1) Destinations are far more multidimensional constructs than consumer products, goods and other types of services.

- 2) The market interests of the various groups of key stakeholders are heterogeneous.
- 3) The issues of decision-making for brand sequences and themes and its accountability is really critical as the politics of holding those decisions can leave the best of theories irrelevant.
- 4) There is a fine balance to be maintained between community interest and brand theory because a top down approach to destination brand implementation is likely to fail.
- 5) Brand loyalty, which is a key aspect of consumer-based brand equity models, can be made more functional to a large extent by monitoring the amount of repeat visitor numbers through a carefully designed visitor monitor programme.
- 6) More importantly, sufficient funding resources should be made available, both through public and private funding bodies to facilitate effective branding of the destination.

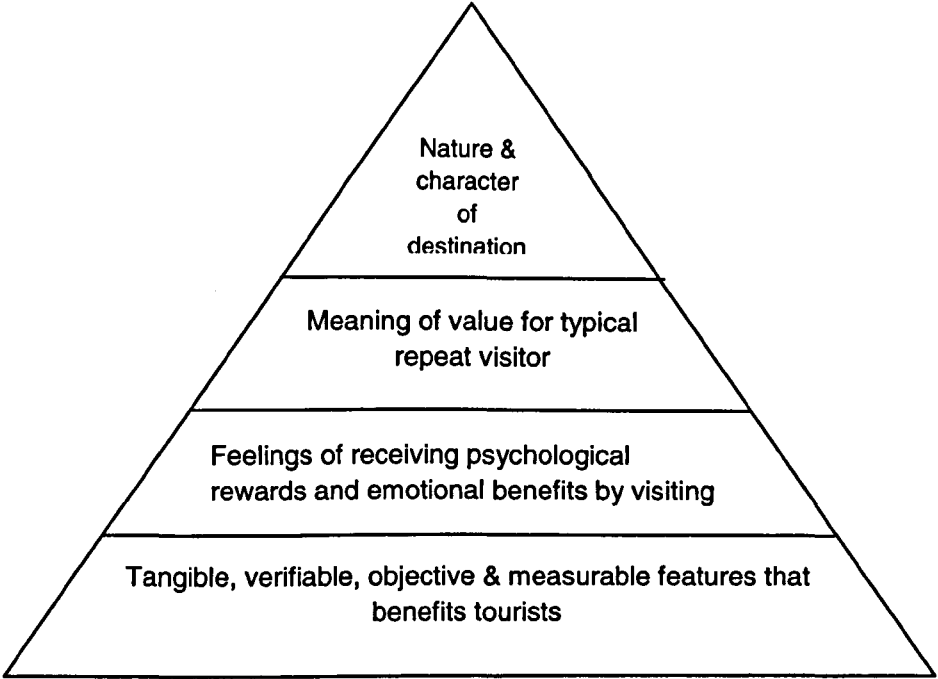
As a result, the need for the destinations to create a unique image in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors is more critical than ever (Morgan, *et.al.* 2004). In addition, creating a unique identity has become a basic requirement for survival within an increasingly competitive global marketplace that seems to be dominated by just a few leading destinations such as London, New York, Paris and Sydney that attract over two-thirds of the worldwide tourism market (Piggott, 2001).

3.5 Destination brand image

The destination image has been argued by experts as an essential component of powerful brands (Aaker, 1996; Kapferer, 1997), making destination brand image a dominating area of research studies in the field of tourism over the past few decades (Hosany, *et. al.* 2007). Destination brand image can be defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person possess or has formulated through experience knowledge of a destination (Crompton, 1979). Therefore, studies in this area have focused predominantly upon the attributes forming destination images (Hankinson, 2005). These attributes range from the ones that capture the necessary essence of a destination within individual segments of it (Etchner and Ritchie, 1993; Morgan, *et. al.* 2002) to the holistic ones that represent the overall brand (Keller, 1993).

According to Metelka, (1981) destination brands generate a similar expectation or image to that of other products and service brands, before it has been actually consumed by the user. As a result, it is important for marketers and researchers to understand these brands better in order to match them to the customer's expectations. Gartner, (1989) and Woodside and Lyonski, (1989) further suggested the need to develop a favourable image of a destination, since the choices of destinations are based on the degree to which they generate positive image. In addition, the more favourable image of a destination, the greater the likelihood of its selection, by a consumer (Goodrich, 1978). In this context, Morgan and Pritchard, (2004) proposed a destination brand-benefit pyramid that further helps in promoting the essence of a destination's brand features which is presented in following Figure (3.4).

Figure 3.4: Destination brand benefit pyramid

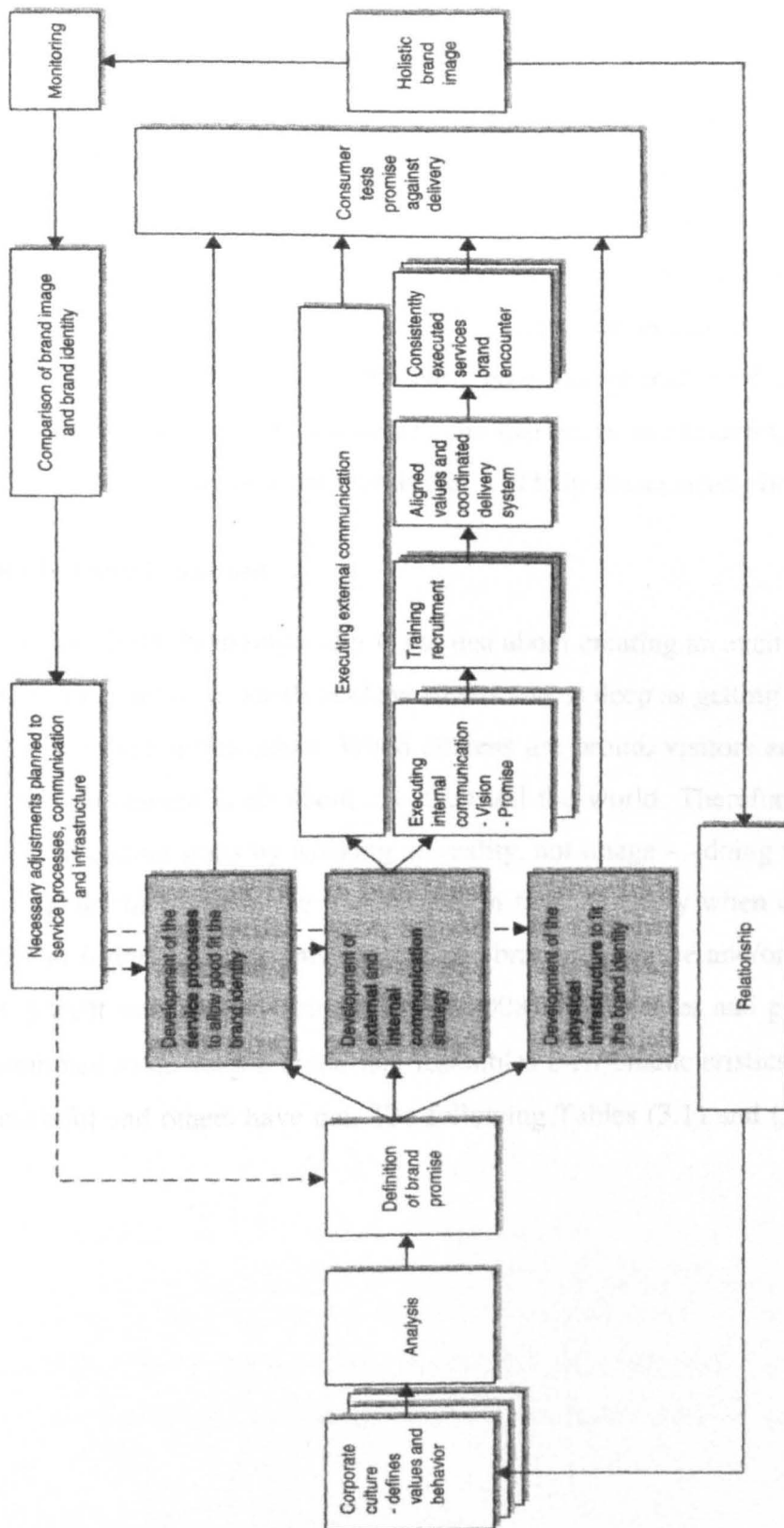


Source: Morgan and Pritchard, (2004)

The main advantage of the pyramid presented in above Figure (3.4) is that it outlines those critical elements that complement consumer's wants to existing destination's features and thus acts as an indicator to the destination brand developers and its regulators. However, the test is to develop a proposition that makes the destination brand pertinent, contemporary and engaging. Furthermore, destinations need to be developed as positive perceptual entities or brands by marketers, within the marketing context (de Chernatony and Dall'olmo Riley, 1998). Hankinson (2004) reinforced this aspect of developing a perceptual entity for

destinations by suggesting that the destinations marketers must seek an overall understanding of images held by both individuals and organisations in order to build more favourable destination brand images and thereby enhancing attractiveness and ongoing developing of a destination. In this context, Moilanen, (2008) proposes a process model for destination brand development as shown in Figure (3.5) below

Figure 3.5: The process model of destination brand development



Source: Moilanen, (2008)

The above process model assists in monitoring the destination brand image held by consumers and comparing it with the destination brand identity, therefore, facilitating brand developers and creators to track progress and identify the required development aspects.

Gunn (1997) further differentiates the nature of images by allocating them into various stages of a continuum. This begins with organic images of a destination which have been developed over long periods of time. They represent the perceptions of consumers about that destination which have been formed by constant exposure to information from various modes of media and other historical sources over time. These are replaced by induced images which are formed by exposure to the destination's marketing programmes, whose key role is to build upon the positive organic images (or work towards changing the negative organic images associated with it). The final stage of the continuum is the complex image of that destination that has resulted from the actual experience of visiting the destination with previously gathered images. Therefore, once clear about the type of image that the destination holds at the current stage in the market, it would benefit the marketers and branding coordinators to work on developing positive destination brands that will help create strong brand images.

3.6 City marketing and branding

According to Gabay (2008) branding a city is not just about creating an exciting logo but also involves attention to detail — as small as clean streets and as deep as getting a city's residents to feel proud to be brand ambassadors. When citizens are proud, visitors are encouraged to find out what the excitement is all about and then tell the world. Therefore, Jones, (2008) suggests that City branding starts by working on reality, not image — doing the regeneration, the social welfare, the investment, the transformation first, and only when change is visible should you start to *brand* a city. In this context, the brand of a place and/or city is not built overnight, but is built over a long period (Farrell, 2008). Many cities and places around the world have attempted to develop a brand that resembles their characteristics, however some have been successful and others have not. The following Tables (3.1) and (3.2) list some of them.

Table 3.1: Cities with successful brands

Cities	Incorporated branding theme
London	Modern and Hi-Tech facilities
Paris	Romance
Glasgow	Arts and Regeneration
Hong Kong	Trade
New York	Progress; Excitement and Multi-dimensional characteristics
Edinburgh	Architecture
Liverpool	Culture and History
Sydney	Olympics and Cosmopolitan features

Source: Guardian, (2008a)

Table 3.2: Cities with failed brands

Cities	Main reasons for failure in branding
Belfast	Unclear logo and Inconsistent brand message
Jerusalem	Lack of brand ownership
Birmingham	Unknown identity
Bristol	Unexplored assets
Toronto	Lack of direction
Beijing	Internal conflicts and disharmony

Source: Guardian, (2008b)

Interestingly, Table 3.2 outlines a number of reasons why city brands fail. This includes for example, unclear and inconsistent branding campaigns, complexity of brand ownership and direction, lack of clarity in asset-recognition, and challenges such as disharmony and internal conflicts within the stakeholder communities. This clearly demonstrates the lack of understanding of a place brand, its characteristic features and their significance, and also the inter-relationships between these factors. This is therefore one of the areas to be explored in this research project. (See findings & discussion of results sections in Chapter 7 & 8)

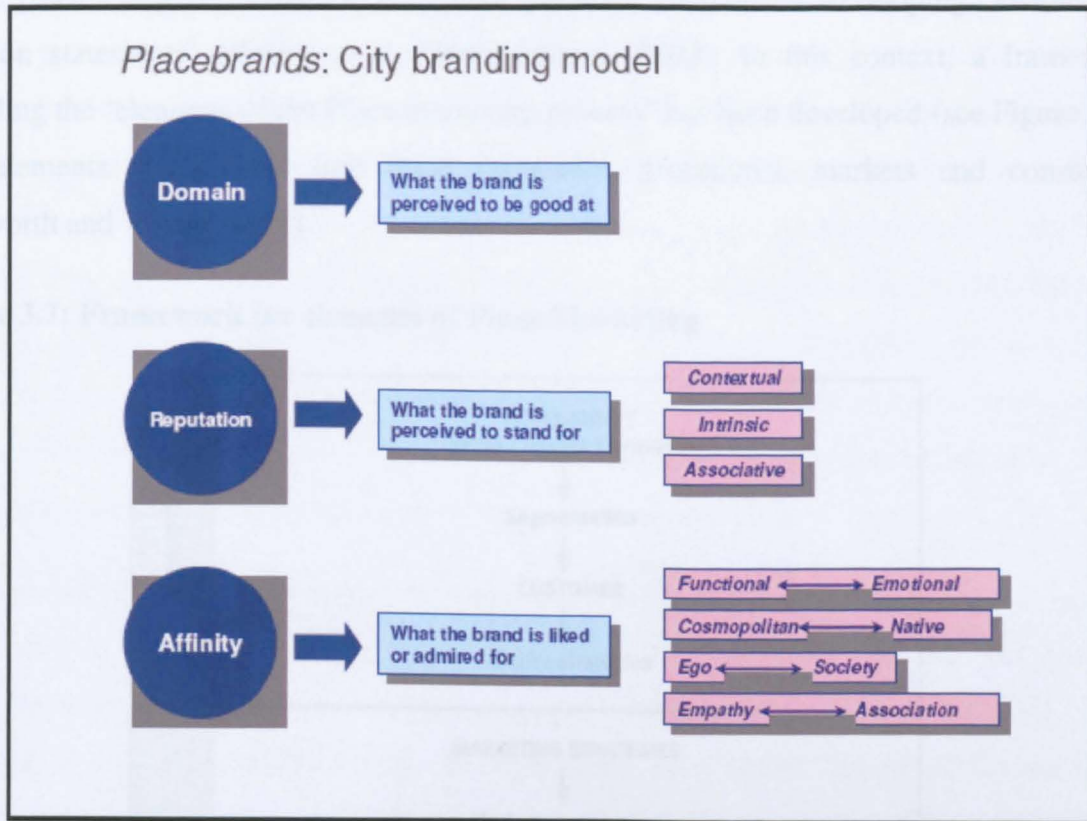
Furthermore, Smyth (1994) purports that the purpose of marketing a city is to spread awareness through promoting an area or the entire city for certain specific activities or events

and in some cases, attracting particular target groups such as tourists, skilled individuals and entrepreneurs, businesses and investors who would buy in to certain products, services and opportunities that the city has on offer or 'sale'. This has become essential as Stigel and Frimann (2006) suggest that most cities have quite similar services, facilities and infrastructure to offer to their prospective visitors. There is therefore a need for effective 'City Marketing' since this will help it facilitate in creating a 'unique identity' that distinguishes one city from another, so that more customers are attracted.

Moreover, Paddison, (1993) suggests that city marketing is more than the mere promotion of a place and could be used as an indicator of innovation and economic growth. City Marketing also assists in developing and implementing specific types of promotional activities which both reflect and strengthen the image of a city. This has been used in some cities to rebuild and redefine their image for example, Glasgow in the UK since 1990 and the Ruhr region in Germany since early 2003. However, this is a relatively new phenomenon which is essentially grounded in corporate branding theory and general marketing concepts. However, branding of cities is far more complex than corporate branding, due to the fact, that cities and the culture within have been developed over hundreds of years, and that is why we carry perceptions that, for instance, '*Danes differ from Italians*' (van Gelder, 2008).

In this context, Placebrands, (2006) suggest a framework that helps understand some of the important aspects of 'City Branding', see Figure 3.6 below.

Figure 3.6: City branding model



Source: *Placebrands*, (2006)

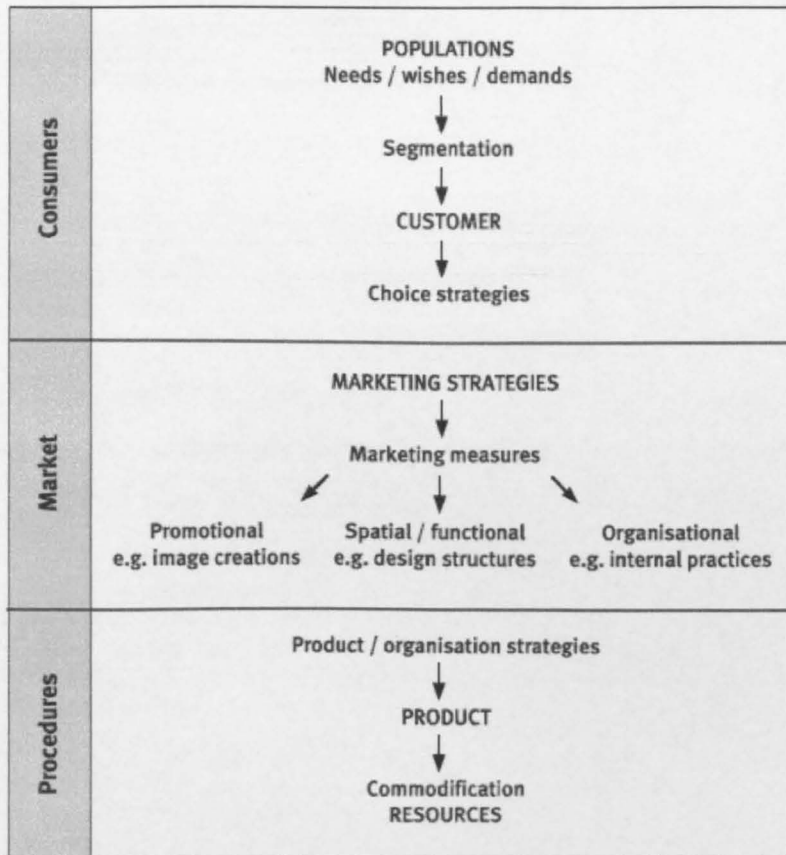
The above figure indicates three important concepts of ‘city branding’ namely: Domain – brand strength; Reputation – brand representation; and Affinity – brand attributes, which helps to register a city’s brand on the consumer’s purchase and/or experience radar. It also helps further to portray and represent an image that meets the needs of the consumers and creates a good perception in their minds (Farrell, 2008). However, failure to consider any of above concepts could lead to unpleasant experiences and negative attributes of the city which may devalue its image and have far reaching consequences for its future growth and prosperity. With this in mind, Anholt, (2007) suggests that ‘City branding’ can therefore be achieved by designing strategic branding of a city in order to build a positive reputation which demonstrates the character and dynamism of that city.

3.7 Place marketing

Place marketing is defined as a process that “consists of analysing marketing opportunities, developing marketing strategies, planning marketing programmes, and managing the

marketing effort” (Kotler, *et.al.* 1997). So, place marketing starts with the strategic analysis of the place’s aspects alongside the initial planning exercise of developing ‘vision’ and ‘mission statements’ (Kotler, *et.al.* 1999; Rainisto 2003). In this context, a framework providing the ‘elements of the Place marketing process’ has been developed (see Figure 3.7). The elements are divided into three categories: procedures, markets and consumers (Ashworth and Voogd, 1994).

Figure 3.7: Framework for elements of Place Marketing



Source: Ashworth and Voogd, (1994)

Each of the elements displayed in the above figure has a important role to play in the place marketing process, therefore, determining the distinctive character of place marketing. This is seen as more than a mere transfer of techniques that have been used in traditional marketing (Kotler, *et.al.* 1993; Ashworth and Voogd, 1994). The above discussion clearly suggests a need for places to differentiate themselves from each other by assertion of their individuality in order to achieve economic, political and socio-psychological objectives of growth and development (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006).

Furthermore, the last few decades have evidenced the general acceptance of promotion and advertising as an efficient tool for public sector and management agencies (Burgess, 1982), and that the appropriate application of marketing techniques was relevant to collective goals and practices and thus as an essential component of the study of places and their management (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006). However, although since the 1990s there has been a serious attempt to create a distinctive place marketing approach (Ashworth and Voogt, 1990; Van den Berg, *et al.* 1990) and marketing specialists have continued to refine their concepts and ideas, most marketing theorists and practitioners, still assume that places act as spatially extended products that require little special attention as a consequence of their spatiality. This clearly shows the lack of specific research in the area of marketing and branding of places and an unexplored issue of its application, to promote place images.

However, it is fair to say that whilst there was a dearth of literature in terms of branding cities and places, at the turn of the century (Hankinson, 2001) it is an area that has received increasing attention, with several journal articles (Ashworth, 2001; Hankinson, 2001, 2004; Trueman, *et al.* 2001, 2004; Rainisto, 2003; Watkins, *et.al.* 2006; Anholt, 2008) and more, recently, a number of book publications on the subject (Morgan *et.al.*, 2004, Donald and Gammack, 2007; Divine, 2007; Donald, *et.al.* 2008; Govers and Go, 2009).

Place marketing has been facilitated by theoretical developments of the associated aspects such as attractions (events) and people marketing, infrastructure and image marketing (Kotler, *et al.* 1993) within the marketing discipline that have been aligned to provide a better understanding of marketing implications for urban regeneration, planning and management (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990). Moreover, the rapid development into the concept of corporate branding and the extensive use and success of product branding has positively influenced the transition from city marketing to city branding (Balmer, 2001; Balmer and Greyser, 2006).

The application of place marketing is largely dependent on construction, communication and management of the city's image, because the simplest of the encounters between cities and their users usually takes place through perceptions and images of the place (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006). Firat and Venkatesh, (1993) also note that marketing of places cannot be anything other than the rational and planned practice of emphasizing differential significance and representational images of a place which are actually the starting point, for setting up place branding applications (Rainisto, 2003; McDonald, 1996).

The marketing of places and in particular, the practice of place branding has grown significantly over the last quarter century (Ward, 1998). Many cities, regions and countries are now actively marketing themselves using techniques normally associated with the creation of classical product brands, thus making place brand as one of those resultant classical products that has emerged out of place marketing strategies (Kotler, *et al.* 2002). This phenomenon has manifested itself in several ways with varying degrees of success: for example, marketing strategies leading to the designation as the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) have arguably changed the perceptions of cities such as Glasgow (ECoC city in 1990) and more recently Liverpool (ECoC city in 2008) in the UK. Moreover, the cultural impacts of holding ECoC title in Glasgow can be witnessed through distinct physical transformation, economic development, social benefits, positive media image and developing civic pride (Garcia, 2005). It has also been found that effect of regeneration by itself and/or as a means of ECoC on local images and identities is the strongest and best-sustained legacy of Glasgow's reign as City of Culture 15 years on.

Also, successful marketing campaigns to host the Olympic Games, such as those mounted by Barcelona (in 1992) and Sydney (in 2000), and more recently, Beijing (in 2008) and London (to be held in 2012), and the spread of global awareness as a result of being the host cities has been a significant factor in building positive reputations for these cities which, in the case of Barcelona and Sydney, have been sustained well beyond the events, and, the future host cities such as London are tipped to gain the same amount of awareness purely through popular anticipation of the Olympics (Anholt, 2007). Furthermore, Gold and Gold (2008) suggest that the primary intention of recent Olympic Games 2008 held by Beijing has been to act as a catalyst in proclaiming China's re-emergence on the world stage as an economic and military power. In addition, the Games represent a joint effort by the Chinese national government, which seeks to absorb the Olympics into national economic regeneration, and a city authority keen to undertake urban regeneration.

Similarly, the construction of architecturally adventurous buildings such as the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Opera House in Sydney, Eiffel tower in Paris, might also be argued to have changed that city's image. Other cities, such as New York have re-built their reputations, through dynamic 'clean-up' strategies supported by creative advertising like the 'I love NY' campaign (Gold, 2006) used to re-launch the city in the 1970s. Marketing campaigns such as these, it has been argued, have transformed places into brands and as a

consequence, brought considerable extra investment and long-lasting cultural and social benefits (Hankinson, 2007).

As a result, more cities, regions and countries are now beginning to engage in marketing rather than rely passively on the slow, organic development of their images through, for example, artistic, historical or literary connections, education or the media (Gunn, 1997). The development of a positive brand image is now regarded as a necessary proactive marketing intervention, as it enhances the holistic drive of perceptual change of a brand, whether it is a product or a service brand representing a place or a nation. Academic interest in this area comes from several academic perspectives. For example, there has been a growing critical literature on place marketing, focusing on its social and political implications (Bradley, *et.al*, 2002). Domains such as geography and urban planning have researched the practice of place marketing from a positive, socio- political perspective in relation to economic growth and development in a place (Gertner, 2007) and according to Ashworth and Voogt, (1990), contributions can be found in the retail marketing and the marketing strategy literature (Warnaby, *et.al*, 2002).

Further to this, there have been attempts made to simplify the complex relationship between nationhood, national and cultural identity, and a place's brand identity (Skinner and Kubacki, 2007). It is, however, probably in the area of tourism marketing which seeks to promote places as travel destinations, that interest, specifically in area of place branding, is most developed (Walmsley and Young, 1998). Place marketers, therefore, understand the need for fresh ideas and sound advice about how to manage the global competition between places and locations.

Places can also be branded and marketed through effective communication of its creative identity, which increases the attraction of places as tourist destinations or for foreign investments, pushing infrastructure development and business opportunities, and for cultural renaissance, prospering arts, heritage and history (Rainisto, 2004). Therefore, it is clear that place branding has been evolved from the place marketing strategies, but is a relatively unexplored field of academic research (Hankinson, 2005), and a thorough analysis of its various facets such as culture and heritage and people (de Chernatony, 2001) arts and literary connections (Gunn, 1997), local governance and political influences (Gertner, 2007), inward investment and tourism sector (Anholt, 2005), can help places to move to a more

sophisticated level of place marketing practices, where they may enjoy continuous and sustainable development and regeneration. Nowadays, cities and their regional economies are more frequently seen as economic assets which in turn are the building blocks in the further economic development of the places itself. Place branding is, therefore, a natural element to be integrated, thus giving an opportunity for the place to develop its brand image that in turn will enable it to attract brand users more efficiently than locations with no brand familiarity (Anholt, 2004).

However, despite this expanding body of literature, very little has been documented about how place marketing and in particular the branding of places, should be managed. This gap in the literature is surprising given the amount of published work highlighting the marketing difficulties arising from the distinctive nature of the place product (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006; Bianchini and Ghilardi, 2007; Pryor and Grossbart, 2007; Gold, 2006; Anholt, 2004; Morgan *et al.* 2004; Gertner, 2007 and Hankinson, 2005). Walker and Hanson, (1998) for instance note that this gap is particularly surprising given the shifting focus of destination branding and place marketing to more sophisticated place branding and from merely promoting tangible products and service brands to the more intangible assets such as emotional and appealing lifestyles and opportunistic characteristics of a place (Lim and O’Cass, 2001), which is clearly evident in the recent development of literature (Skinner and Kubacki, 2007; Kerr, 2006). These more recent contributions to marketing theory, it is argued, are also of potential value in the context of the management of place brands (McDonald, *et.al.* 2001).

3.8 Choosing targets for place marketing

The place must identify its potential target category in order to achieve its specified objectives and goals (Kotler, *et.al.* 1993) when it wants to attract buyer groups or targets a specific consumer categories such as visitors (maybe business or leisure tourists), investment companies (both national and global) or a task-force category such as entrepreneurs, skilled workers, professionals or migrants,.

So for example, Kotler, *et.al.* (1999) relates the process to Florence in Italy, which possesses one of the greatest treasure houses of renaissance art in the world and flourishes on its tourism industry, attracting visitors who want to experience its art, history and cultural life. However, even this target market is complex and consists of different age and income groups

belonging to wide demographics; professional groups such as art curators, European historians, and their professional associations and conventions; students of Michelangelo, Donatello and other great masters of painting and sculpture found in Florence; possibly even business-interest related firms in the fields of art-supply, paint manufacturing, and the graphic arts, attracted to Florence for business meetings or to create new sales branches. Similarly, one may consider Dubai, Saudi Arabia, which is often been tagged as “*the city of golden sands*” in the media (Govers and Go, 2009), where acres of land have undergone major re-development and regeneration in terms of properties, tourist resorts and a commercial platforms for businesses through major construction projects. In this context, a major target market for Dubai consists of Western, European, South Asian and Far Eastern firms in industries such as real-estate and property management, tourism and conventions, holiday and leisure organisers, and a target group category of residents and workers that include professionals, skilled workers, investors and entrepreneurs.

3.9 Place marketing in practice

There are four key aspects that have been identified as important for a place to increase tourist numbers, attract more visitors and residents, increasing industrial output, improving inward investments and increasing international trade, and they are image marketing, attractions marketing, infrastructure marketing and people marketing (Kotler, *et.al.* 1993). Each of them is discussed below in following sub-sections:

3.9.1 Image marketing

Image marketing plays an important role in long-term marketing strategies including performance improvement and enhancing effective communication with potential new and existing customers (Gambles and Schuster, 2003). In terms of competitive places and cities, the overall goal of image marketing is to change the perception of a place or a city with an increased penetration to the key target markets. Image marketing and branding campaigns also work hand-in-hand as an effective communication tool as it keeps the potential and existing customer segments informed and aware (Ashworth and Voogd, 1994). The better informed the target groups are about the offerings of a place (for example, how to find out about hotels and restaurants, estate and property management agencies, transport links, shopping and leisure areas, and about the costs and benefits involved due to competitive nature of the market), the easier a visit to a place becomes for users, especially the new ones.

The better the place image and the higher the level of visitor satisfaction, the more likely a recommendation of its offerings from visitor to a non-visitor becomes (Kotler, *et.al.* 1999).

3.9.2 Attractions marketing

Places must not only be marketing their destination but also any unique attractions by providing easy access to these via roads, rails, sea, or air networks (Kotler, *et.al.* 1993). As a result of concentrating the marketing of attractions and services into small areas of a large town or city, creates excitement, adventure, interest and more importantly generates larger crowds and an influx of tourists and visitors. Too many places try to scatter their attractions to avoid overcrowding but this may be self-defeating as this will divide the visitors unevenly, in particular, to the choice of their attraction (Gold and Ward, 1994).

A place may promote one, a few or many of its attractions. For example: Liverpool's marketing campaign – 'Visit Liverpool' developed as a result of massive infrastructure regeneration that took place over recent years. Its 'European Capital of Culture City 2008' title highlighted the city as a diverse, energetic and exciting place to be, where it has got something for everyone (VisitLiverpool.com, 2008). Further to this, the images used to campaign and market Liverpool's brand clearly targeted a range of diverse audiences and consumer groups featuring snapshots of its famous World Heritage sites of waterfronts, docks, Maritime Museum, Liver buildings and Beatles – (Liverpool World Heritage, 2008) for tourism interests, Football (sports), Liverpool Echo Arena – new conference and convention centre (business), Liverpool One (shopping and entertainment centre), Cruise Liner Landing port (trade) and various cultural aspects (VisitLiverpool, 2008), suggesting the place to be a 'All in One' package.

However, it is important that places continuously monitor the relative popularity of their variety of attractions by maintaining an active effort in tracking the number and type of tourists that are attracted to each of its specific locations (Kotler, *et.al.* 1993). For example the popularity of the 'Metropolitan Museum of Art' and 'Empire Estate Building' in New York, 'Arch of Triumph' in Paris, 'Big Ben' and 'Buckingham Palace' in London, the 'Opera House' in Sydney or the 'Colosseum' in Rome, unexpectedly or gradually may change and authorities monitoring those within the places needs to act upon it as it may affect the influx of visitors negatively. In contrast, it should also be noticed that spectacular sites and incredible and natural features alone do not attract visitors but provision of extended value

and rewarding experience, makes a huge difference for tourists, while making a selection of a place to visit. Understanding the emotionality attached to the culture and heritage, history and people of a place is very important, while delivering its symbolic and functional characteristics (Morgan, *et.al.* 2002).

3.9.3 Infrastructure marketing

The infrastructure available to support the efficient distribution and promotion of products and services that a place possesses is a critical consideration, which potential investors, businesses and consumers of a place need to refer to (Manrai, *et al.* 2001). Potential buyers of a place market could be attracted by specific advantages of a place's infrastructure while implementing the 4ps strategies of marketing (Palmer, 2009) in advertisements and promotional activities. This shows the extent to which the particular place can offer buyers an opportunity to develop and prosper in the future, if they decide to relocate. Moreover, Kotler, *et.al.* (1993) note that infrastructure marketing is an important tool since image and attractions might fail, at times, to answer some of the queries that a place may come across, such as issues regarding the availability of transportation, daily delivery of goods for citizens and businesses, high rate of graduate jobs and good education for the students, recreational and leisure facilities and safety measures. They further note that infrastructure is fundamental for the development of a place, day-in and day-out and thus require a considerable marketing too, to promote a place's overall image.

3.9.4 People marketing

Historically, places have competed for people. These have included traders, merchants, work and labour forces, herders and homesteaders, even before the establishments of governments, ruling authorities and legal systems, through diverse actions such as slavery, open-auctions, by conquering, or by feudal systems, in order for the nations to acquire cheap labour and new markets (Kotler, *et al.* 1993). In addition, people marketing also play an important role in the development of place, especially in targeting different resident and worker groups. For example, the UK may want to increase the number of its skilled IT workforce to take advantage of the technological advancements; for this it will need to attract more highly skilled workers from abroad – both from the European Union and beyond - in order to secure the future of high technology, 'knowledge intensive' industries in an increasingly global world (Onrec, 2008). Also, for places such as Sweden and Vienna, which are facing the challenge of an ageing population, these might be interested in attracting young people in the

community and may have to work hard to do so. Further to this, Kotler, *et.al.* (1993) suggested that in order to target specific people groups such as residents or workers, places must develop supporting incentives. For example, while targeting younger families, a place must emphasize its provision of schools and general safety and security as major aspects of developments to offer, on the other hand, the working class population are likely to look for employment opportunities, accessibility, entertainment and shopping facilities.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that despite the expanding body of literature, very little has been documented about how place marketing and in particular place branding should be managed. This gap in the literature is surprising given the number of publications that highlight the marketing difficulties that arise from the distinctive nature of the place product (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006; Bianchini and Ghilardi, 2007; Pryor and Grossbart, 2007; Gold, 2006; Anholt, 2004; Morgan *et al.* 2004; Gertner, 2007 and Hankinson, 2005), and Walker and Hanson (1998) note that this gap is particularly surprising given the shifting focus of destination branding and place marketing towards the more sophisticated practice of place branding. There is a growing trend from merely promoting tangible products and service brands to the more intangible assets such as emotional and appealing lifestyles and opportunistic characteristics of a place (Lim and O’Cass, 2001; Skinner and Kubacki, 2007; Kerr, 2006), and it is argued that these more recent contributions to marketing theory are also of potential value in the context of the management of place brands (McDonald, *et.al.* 2001; Anholt, 2007; Govers and Go, 2009).

Moreover, this chapter draws out a clear understanding of various terminologies and concepts within the area of marketing of places ranging from Country-of-Origin to Nation Branding and nation brand images, and from Destination Branding to Place Marketing deriving a clear need to understand Place Brands and Place Branding techniques and to differentiate these from the pool of existing literature of similar terminologies that are often confused. The next Chapter discusses these in detail.

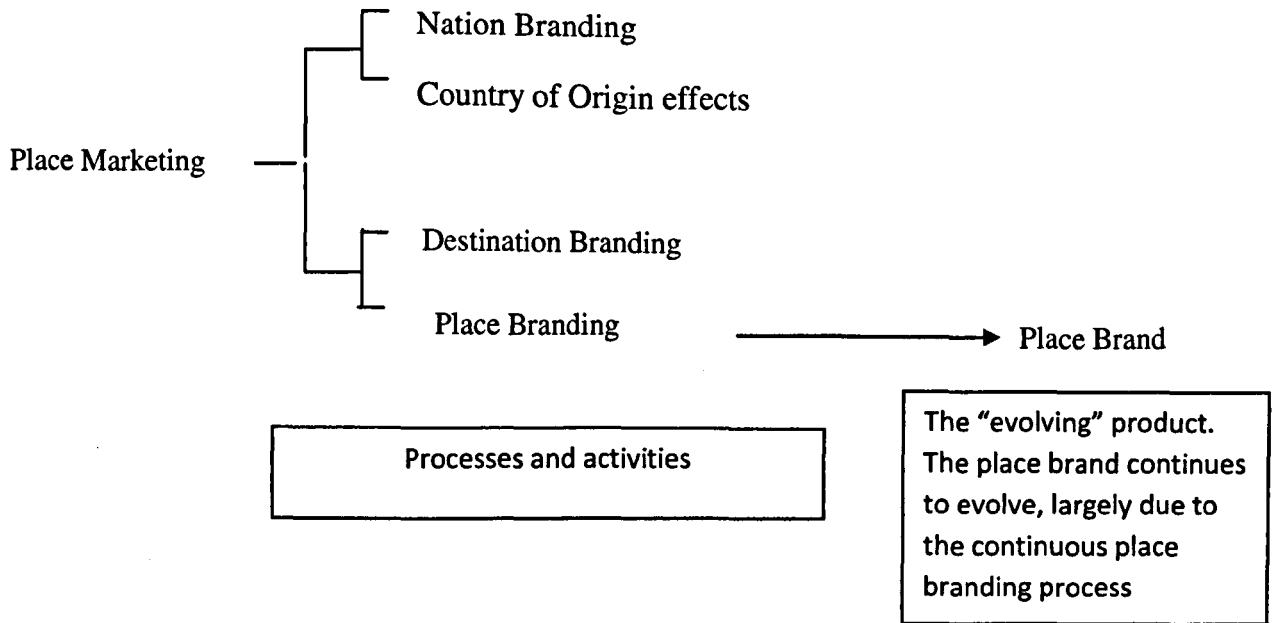
Chapter 4: Place Branding and the Place Brand

4.1 Introduction

An understanding of the Place Branding process and of the Place Brand itself is a fundamental component of this thesis.

The Place Branding process has evolved out of place marketing activities and an appreciation of the semantic differences is important as displayed in the following figure:

Figure 4.1 – Place Branding differentiation



The above Figure (4.1) is not an attempt to produce a cladistic map of the evolution of place branding, since this would have to be speculative and undoubtedly contentious, This is more to differentiate the terms, understand the similarities of terminology, and appreciate the flow from Place Marketing through to Place Branding, and that these are processes leading to the Place Brand itself.

Place Branding is situated within the Place Marketing literature but the later term also embraces the wider and more generic marketing management theories and practices, whereas Place Branding is specific to the management of place image. The Place Brand itself is an unfinished “product”: it is the perception of place by the consumer and is constantly changing

as a result of the continuous place branding process (including the real and imagined experiences and interaction that the consumer has with the brand).

The following subsections in this Chapter discuss various place brand terminologies and further explore place branding practice, its importance and the recent development in this area in detail. This then leads to a discussion of the place brand itself and its role in sustainable growth and regeneration

4.2 What is place branding?

Place Branding has been defined as:

'The practice of applying brand strategy and other marketing techniques and disciplines to the economic, social, political and cultural development of cities, regions and countries'.

(Papadopoulos, 2004:36)

O'Donovan, (2004) suggests that the phrase '*practise of applying brand strategy*' implies a conscious effort on the part of policy makers to employ a deliberate strategy to build a brand image, which would enable a place to achieve a more distinct identity than its competitors. In contrast, Pryor and Grossbart, (2007) argue that the above definition of place branding might be sufficient to explain marketing of places, in particular, but is insufficient for the development of theories related to place branding. Further, they add, that the non-specific nature of the 'other marketing techniques and disciplines' offers little guidance to understanding how, if at all, conventional strategy is adapted for place branding: they agree that whilst place branding is indeed a practise, they nonetheless argue that the current reductionist understanding of place branding may contribute to the application of traditional branding theory and strategy in such contexts that were neither intended nor properly investigated and explored in detail.

Furthermore, the considerations derived from comments of the academic researchers and scholars who share the conceptualization of the brand process, describe branding as having symbolic and social qualities, and the basis for the production of both identity and imagery, Pitt, *et.al.* (2006) suggest the following definition of *place branding* as:

'The process of inscribing to a place symbols and images that represent that set of central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics that actors have ascribed to that place, thereby creating a focus of identity', (p.116)

The above definition suggests that the place branding processes include both acknowledgment and dedication, which is not always the case in the domain of the products and service (Pitt, *et. al.* 2006). However, much of the opposition shown towards the concept of place branding arises directly from the popular or simple meaning of the terminology 'brand' and 'branding'. This could lead to a vague assumption that the practitioners and supporters of the discipline wish to brand nations: *'like unique entities with specific features, or apply an attractive logo and catchy slogan'*, and the market construct or concept appears as if it were nothing different than a new or a modified product in the supermarket (Anholt, 2005:117). Similarly, Hankinson, (2001) argues that it is not the common interpretation but the actual complexities and limited public sector budgets that has limited place branding programmes to just *" raising awareness or creating differentiation through the propagation of logos, symbols and strap-lines"*, (p.129)

Furthermore, place branding is a process that facilitates in creating the *"most realistic, most competitive and most compelling strategic vision for the city, region, or country"* (Placebrands, 2006). Arguably, place brands are completely different from other forms of brands, and place branding is a process that derives from interpretive, rather than common managerial, techniques (Pryor and Grossbart, 2007). This in fact, leads to an understanding that simply providing a place with new geographical look, adding specific titles to its original name and a new slogan can change its fortunes drastically, is illogical. In contrast, if best practices, innovative techniques and characteristic observations from branding process are intelligently, creatively and responsibly applied to the places, then according to (Anholt, 2005; Placebrands, 2006) the consequences are fascinating, long lasting and widespread, as this helps in re-building, a potentially strong and more positive image of a place. Unfortunately due to the lack of clarity about the difference between place branding and the promotion of the nation's individual assets or 'products' and 'constructs' such as tourism, inward investment, culture and heritage and export, not only are consumers often confused about what place branding is, but they also find it difficult to understand what actually is branded (Anholt, 2002). Papadopolous, (2004) further points out that the available literature (Anholt, 2002; Kotler, *et. al.* 1993; Hankinson, 2004 and Warnaby, *et. al.* 2002) suggest that

the concept of place branding is at a critical stage, and in fact needs new research directions to be explored, to create new knowledge which would give better understanding to its applications and impacts.

However, it is also to be noted that the evolution of place branding has provided a more complex and subtle understanding of places and the importance of their positioning both economically and socially to succeed in the competitive global market environment (Gold, 2006). To achieve a place's democratic, cultural, educational and industrial aspirations places need to put forward a sensible, authentic and coherent branding strategy that drives continuous investment, tourism, immigration and community development. Pryor and Grossbart, (2007) note that place branding has been a resultant product of a recent increase in sensitivity of competitive market pressures that has seen some places seeking desperate marketing and branding solutions that may provide them unique '*selling factor*' and extra edge which is a step beyond conventional tourism and destination promotions.

Moreover, this evolutionary field of branding has captured widespread interests from various academic and practicenor groups such as sociologists, urban planners and geographers, political scientists, both private and public sector and business scholars. Existing research (Anholt, 2002; Warnaby, *et. al.* 2002) offers considerable evidence to support that place branding is very effective and prolific if considered sensibly and applied thoughtfully. Furthermore, Pryor and Grosssbart, (2007) point to a few key contributions that drive the development to the place branding concept, such as: places can be branded to create a unique identity; however, they differ from mere products and services in theoretical ways (Anholt, 2002). Thus, place branding is a special case of marketing places unlike the conventional concepts of tourism promotion, destination branding and corporate and product branding and so requires an additional development of associated theoretical concepts (Ashworth, 1993; Warnaby, *et. al.* 2002)and distinctive branding practices.

This in fact is reinforced by Hankinson (2004) as he suggests that the case of place branding is different due to its multidimensional characteristics. It is unlike the practise of commonly used branding concepts, as it lacks a sole ownership and gives out inconsistent messages throughout the range of its stakeholder groups. Further, Hankinson (2004; 2005) notes that place branding appear to be multifaceted, as it maintains a diverse stakeholder groups who shape and create distinct features of it, by influencing it by one way or another. In terms of a

place, these groups of stakeholders can be termed as 'Brand creators' who may include the local governance e.g. local and regional authorities and city council, chambers of commerce, the media, educational institutions, local businesses and their allies and residents from diverse communities. Moreover, the multidimensional characteristic of a place brand do hold a varied consumer base that can be grouped as 'Brand users' i.e. the visitors both for business and tourism purposes, inward investors, skilled migrants, commuters, event organizers and again residents, who in turn consumes different facets of the place brand (Aaker, 1996).

Place branding provides a far broader spectrum of research areas than just associated purely with conventional brand management, brand strategy and destination branding as it has attracted interests from fields of sociology, history, geography, national identity and politics, for example, that may be regarded as making an important contribution, which wasn't the case in marketing and branding literature so far (Dinnie, 2004).

4.3 Development of the place brand '*concept*'

The evolution of place branding practices has been the result of judicious application of place marketing strategies, in which intelligent, considered and imaginative advanced applications taken from best practices, techniques and observations from 'branding' processes in general, have been applied to "place". This has done much to enhance a place's brand (Anholt, 2005), and in some cases, such as Bradford (Trueman, 2004), Glasgow (Garcia, 2005), New York (Kotler, *et al.* 1999), Dubai (Government of Dubai, 2008) and Liverpool (Liverpool Culture Company, 2008), the consequences have been incredibly positive and potentially world-changing for these cities. In addition, a number of places, cities, regions and states across the globe have already understood the necessity of developing and promoting some kind of competitive edge (Gertner, 2007), which is largely due to the need for economic development and sustainable growth. As a result, places are adopting strategic marketing, creative branding practices and innovative management concepts and tools to succeed in the rapidly developing global economy (Ranisito, 2003).

The world's marketplace is currently going through a major globalization phase where advanced branding theories of destination marketing (Morgan, *et.al.* 2004), city marketing (Smyth, 1994) and nation branding (Anholt, 2004) such as those applied specifically to countries, destinations, regions and cities have been developed to enhance their respective images by overcoming negative features, and instead nurturing the assets such as culture and

heritage, architecture, local skills, prosperous communities and investments for future growth. Anholt, (2005) commenting on this development, points out that the ground-breaking convergence of advanced brand theory and statecraft, (as place branding is), creates a new paradigm within branding practise that outlines how the places should be managed in future.

Moreover, he suggests that the logic behind more and more cities and places adopting the disciplines of marketplaces, is predominantly due to globalisation, which has resulted in a common consumer-base, where a country is competing with other countries, a destination with other destinations, and a city or a region with another cities or regions for its share of attraction, trust, goodwill, reputation, investments and regeneration. Therefore, if people (and their values) and place image and its objectives are the highest priority in the place branding strategy, then sustainable development will eventually follow. However, place branding is identified as an area that is still predominantly practitioner-led and where academic research-led knowledge has been slow to build up, although greater interest from academics is now beginning to develop (Dinnie, 2004).

According to Kotler and Gertner, (2004) place branding has become a necessary requirement as a result of technological advancement and increased mobility of people and resources in the 21st century. People are unlikely to want to live and work in a place which is not perceived as having a sustainable future. This has made places more competitive, in terms of its offerings to wider audiences. Lebedenko, (2004) has reinforced the impact of globalisation on places as this has provoked both need and development of place branding for places to compete in global market place. He further comments on the shifting focus of consumers towards a place's appearance, opportunistic characteristics and wider utilisation of talent and technologies, (in contrast to post-industrial economies), which has also enhanced the need for place branding.

In this context, the need to brand a place through effectively creating and communicating its identity to a wider audience, has given a new dimension to place marketing strategies, and thus the emergence of place branding that can help places to move to a more sophisticated level in their place marketing activities (Rainisto, 2004). In addition, it can also create a portfolio of unique attractions and competitive features that makes a place stand out from its competitors, thus providing an extra edge to its appeal. Place branding also gives a place a lead over other locations which only practise either promotion to attract visitors or advertise

its business opportunities, as the branding process forces a holistic development of a place that has something to offer to every potential stakeholder.

With this in mind, Anholt and van Gelder, (2006) also note that place branding is not only about effective, simple and clear communication of image and identity of a place, country or a city but place branding is an approach that uses brand strategy to drive and encourage consistent on-brand behaviour. In place branding, the role of communication is not merely making the world aware about a place, but it is an efficient way of making the world aware of the opportunities that it provides and actions that it performs which best demonstrate what kind of place it is.

Place branding ensures that a place gets the deserved applause for its real strengths and positive attributes and behaviour, and that the place brand gains appropriate brand equity (Keller, 2008) from the recognition which that behaviour is truly worthy of. This clearly sets up a provision, of understanding the need of place branding, to enhance further clarity to the complex issues in existing marketing of places' literature, which is discussed in the next subsection.

4.4 The need for place branding

Kotler and Gertner, (2002) point out a need to adopt conscious branding strategies for nations, states, cities and/or places, if they are to compete effectively on the global stage and further, this requires more focused and controlled branding efforts in order to attract higher number of tourists, industries, investments, businesses, skilled workforce and to find markets to sell their exports (Dinnie, 2004). Earlier, Olins (1999) indicated that identity and brand management practices would become part of the agenda for policymakers and will be seen as a significant asset to the nations and places. To reinforce this, van Ham (2001) suggested that positive image, distinctive identity, brand differentiation and reputation are important in shaping a region and place's strategic equity, therefore making place branding an important entity to be considered.

Anholt, (2005) suggested the following indicative points that clearly direct the policy makers within marketing to give immediate attention to the aspect of place branding. This has particular relevance to those who are working in the applied 'place branding' arena and are tasked with promoting the place brand:

- Due to the increased spending power of the consumers and the growing international middle class population, who are willing to explore unfamiliar destinations and take advantage of cheaper international travel costs, has forced places to become more competitive as a tourist destination.
- The increased awareness of the consumer with 24/7 media influences makes it even more important for a place to generate positive attributes within the consumer base (repeat buyers and potential buyers) and to persuade them to consider that place offering. Therefore, it requires a continuous positive brand image highlighted in the media, about its features such as culture, location, communities and infrastructure and overcoming any pre-existing negative facets, which may still remain.
- To overcome 'product parity' amongst destination brands places need to design a meaningful and long-lasting brand strategy that can help a respective place to compete in the global marketplace.
- The fierce competition of attracting customers from the scarce pool of international investors with an increased choice of developing locations around the world with a similarity of competitive product and services offerings has added even more pressure for a place, making it necessary to develop increasingly competitive strategies that can counter the threat of highly mobile global capital drivers, on one hand. On the other hand, this has also identified the need for a place to develop more sophisticated and brand-led approaches that enhance its market positioning.
- There is increasing competition between places to forefront their uniqueness through continuous positive media presence, advertising, marketing and promotional activities, to attract the limited pool of customers that is available due to the closely related global economic system.
- The recently interest in 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CSR) and the need to be ethical and environment-friendly (*go green drive*) has become even more critical for a place to implement a stronger brand strategy for building and managing a positive country-of-origin effect.
- The degree of importance to consider reputation of a place's image has become more and more essential, especially, in the case of places with developing economies.

- Globalisation and competitive marketplace has forced places to focus predominantly to develop positive image and unique identity.
- Places urgently need to build a proven and well-recognized reputation to attract skilled migrants. This can only be achieved by gaining trust, belief and satisfaction among the target groups. Nations, regions, cities and places area all competing more intensely to attract skilled and talented working group population, as it enhances the skills' level that a place may possess.
- Finally, the recent growing awareness about place's association with negative or positive images and attributes, influenced by intense international media, has pushed a place to reposition itself via regeneration and specific brand-led marketing strategies.
- van Gelder, (2008) founder of Placebrands Ltd., reinforced the need for place branding by also noting the intense globalisation which has made places competitive. At the same time, he also alerts the policy-makers to the issue of probable risk, whereby places are increasingly trapped by the unexpected and unprecedented shift in focus of the competition, and rapidly lose their competitive edge in terms of offerings, be it economic, social or cultural. Moreover, Anholt and van Gelder, (2008) suggest that toady's places have had to shift their focus from the traditional ways of development, welfare, regulation, policies and government dependence to become more technologically advanced, highly informed, creative, collaborative and more involved in ways of regeneration and repositioning (Rainisto, 2003):
- It is the communities for example, the local population, the citizens, the businesses and institutions that shape a place rather than just the infrastructure and facilities for example, modern buildings and skylines, the motorways, airports and railways.
- There has been a need to understand that this infrastructure (that includes the above tangible factors) actually acts as a base for the community investments, interests, and involvement and the quality of this foundation does influence the opportunities that it brings with it as an influx, to benefit the community.
- The increased globalisation that has accelerated and mobilised the flow of capital and goods around the world even more, making many businesses and people footloose, causing a decrease in loyalties and allegiances to some places and empathy to others.

- Decisions, investments and initiatives towards regeneration and growth taken for the community of today in a place, may not be the right ones for the community of tomorrow, with a probable risk of the tomorrow's community that is certain to be a temporary one, too. This not only means that places need to be dynamic to meet ever-changing needs and demands of today's community but must also be proactive in terms of attracting continuous influx of interest and involvement of both private and civic sectors to encourage loyalty and commitment.

All the above developments and awareness has worked as an added 'fuelling element' to the growing needs among the communities to define themselves in terms of culture, identity, aspirations, achievements and competitiveness.

4.5 Significance of place branding

Place branding plays an important role in bringing together a range of existing specialisms that a place may hold in terms of its brand management strategies and progressive development policies, in particular, with an aim to create a new area with equal emphasis on visionary strategies projecting forward and hands-on implementation (Placebrands, 2008). In addition, place branding also assists in developing a new image of place that is more appealing and exciting making it a critically important phenomenon. This complements the generic acknowledgment that consumers encounter places through perceptions and images, with a place's image being the sum of the beliefs, ideas and impressions that consumers have gathered of a place (Kotler, *et.al.* 1999).

Furthermore, successful place branding combines the responsible and intelligent application of disciplines and techniques from commercial and corporate branding, along with new collaborative leadership and partnership development practices within stakeholders, with a creative approach to existing methods of global relations, diplomacy and policy making. Therefore, place branding is a process that enables a place to build on all its strengths, and make a meaningful sense out of the often complex, multi-dimensional characteristics (Hankinson, 2005) and conflicting assortment of its past, current and future identity (van Gelder, 2008).

In this context, Anholt, (2003) suggest that place branding has provided a much needed platform to the emerging economies to brand both their exports and their nations and/or

countries and places in order to compete more effectively in the global marketplace and escape from the indigent status of being simply a supplier state to the wealthy and developed nations and/or places.

Place branding helps a place to built reputation and image (Selby and Morgan, 1996; Ashworth and Voogd, 1990) on its real qualities which are creative, distinct, positive, attractive, and sustainable and most of all helps in reflecting relevance and relationship of opinions to many different people around the world. Moreover, Anholt (2005) suggests that place branding practices makes a place capable of being able to compete with other places for its share of the global wealth, talent, events, notice, awareness and consideration, just like any other famous city, a nation, or a famous organisation finds it easier to attract investments, visitors, famous events and play a major role by actively participating in international affairs. Implementing objective-led and goal-driven place brand strategies (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006) facilitate the development of the most realistic, most opportunistic, most competitive and most convincing strategic vision for a city, region or a country, and that the focus to prosper is supported by prudent investment (Kotler and Gertner, 2004), visitor attraction and effective communication between the place and the rest of the world.

4.6 Place brand

The place branding process helps to shape the place brand itself, and it is important to fully understand the place brand construct in the context of this thesis. A place brand is a perception that people have about a place, city, region or a country and a place's reputation among those people that the place embraces (Anholt, 2005). Further, this author notes that all these people (which include residents, investors, students and visitors) have differing perceptions of a place and its offerings and therefore a place brand is a complex, multidimensional construct with a constantly changing reputation which according to Anholt, (2005:297) is based upon '*various individual beliefs, perceptions and prejudices which coincide at some point and diverge at others*'. As a result, a place brand plays a key role in the decision making of potential inward investors, tourists, businesses, students, skilled workers and others, as to whether they invest (time, effort, future and money) in the place or not. The key factors such as lifestyle provision, ease of access to local and regional services and facilities such as transportation link and utilities, robust infrastructure (providing business development opportunities), availability of leisure, entertainment and shopping areas, safety

and security in public and private areas, culture and visitor attractions such as appealing heritage and monuments to explore, etc. all combine to influence the decision of the above target groups. In relation to this, Gold (2006), suggests that a place brand is neither a simple message nor part of a marketing strategy, but it is actually the residual perception left in the recipient's mind about a place after encountering its varying facets through personal experience, media exposure, purchasing its products and services or receiving second-hand assessments through word-of mouth.

Gold (2006) further points that the place is quite often held hostage by preconceptions of its pre-existing brand, which may be negative or positive. So, rather than creating a brand, it possesses one already. Furthermore, place brands are not a short term creation, but they are built up over a long period of time by its creators. Developments in place branding practices may therefore be regarded as efforts to reposition these existing brands with a new look, an invigorated value proposition and creativity, to enable the place to compete both domestically and internationally. A place needs to maintain and manage its repositioned or pre-existing brand, whichever is effective, in order to be continuously appealing to investors, tourists, skilled workers, which in turn will develop strong communities that have tremendous self-belief, or mark its existence on the international stage to enhance the sale of its products and services abroad (Anholt, 2003).

4.7 Characteristics of place brand

According to van Gelder, (2008), the issues that many places face now and/or may face in the future is neither distinct nor completely functional, rather they are complex, multi-faceted and involve a mixture of emotional, functional and symbolic sentiments (Kotler and Keller, 2005). For example, issues and problems that arise in a place such as community dissatisfaction, integration of immigrants into the society, transport facilities and traffic congestion, health care and pension crises, relocating or closure of local businesses as a result of lack of support and attention, deteriorating environmental conditions and increased competition for survival are all matters that a single authoritative body within a place is unable to deal with: in other words, their issues defy the traditional governmental capabilities (van Gelder, 2008).

Therefore, to deal with these issues it requires a collaborative involvement and joint-participation of not just local government and authorities, but also the private and public sectors, educational, cultural and arts institutions, as these also play a critical role in a place.

Blichfeldt, (2005) suggested that place brands possess many facets and therefore multiple audiences who either shapes or uses it. Moreover, (Hankinson, 2004, 2005; Morgan, *et.al.* 2004, Anholt, 2006; de Chernatony, 2006; Baker and Cameron, 2008; Farrell, 2008) also identified place brands to be multi-dimensional constructs characterised by multiple stakeholders who shape the place brand and multiple stakeholders who use the place brand and these, who by intent or by chance, help co-create the brand. The brand therefore has diverse ownership, which results in a lack of leadership and direction. At the same time, the brand users have no single voice and instead often have conflicting wants and needs.

In the case of Liverpool ECoC 2008, the brand creators include for example, Liverpool City Council, The Liverpool Chambers of Commerce (LCCC), The Mersey Partnership (TMP), The North-West Development Agency (NWDA), The Liverpool'08: European Capital of Culture Company (ECCC), Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Federation (FSME's), Voluntary Sector, Local Businesses, Corporate and Public bodies.

It is clear that even among these groups there is no single direction, but a series of wants and needs that put the brand forward in an organic, evolutionary way. In addition, many 'Brand Users' are also 'Brand Creators'; which creates a dynamic and eclectic brand mixture. And again within the 'City of Liverpool' – 'brand users' include Tourists, Local residents, Migrants (skilled and unskilled), Inward Investors, Corporate businesses, and SME's, local and government authorities.

Although, place brand is a multi-dimensional and multi-faceted (Hankinson, 2004) construct, place brand development is not solely a task for the public sector, private sector or local governing authorities, but rather a collaborative undertaking of the place's key stakeholders, may it be 'brand developers' or 'brand users', as mentioned above. Therefore, this makes it an extremely fascinating concept to investigate but a very nebulous construct to study.

4.8 Key facets of place brand

It is clear from the literature reviewed so far that most authors recognised multiple facets of a place, destination and/or nation and, whilst there is a little agreement on what those facets

include, there are nonetheless a plethora of place brand models. The destination brand literature has done much to contribute to the creation of these place brand models, so for instance, Morgan, *et.al.* (2004) have developed a destination brand benefit prism which is designed to identify a destination's advertising proposition through an assessment of the "tangibles" (Level 1, forming the base of the prism), the benefits to the tourist (Level 2), the psychological rewards (Level 3), what constitutes added value (Level 4) and finally the "essential character" at the apex of the prism. Anholt on the other hand, has developed both a destination brand hexagon (Anholt, 2005) and a city brand hexagon (Anholt, 2006). The former combines the more immediate perceptual components (culture, people and exports – which de Chernatony (2006) redefines as what the place is known for) with less immediate perceptual aspects such as tourism, governance, and investment, as the essential elements of location branding. Anholt (2006) accepts that this model is inappropriate for city brands and instead, proposes a hexagon comprising Presence (familiarity and contribution to world culture), Place (physical aspects), Potential (economic and educational opportunities), Pulse (vibrancy), People (and cultural alignment) and Prerequisites (living standards and amenities).

In addition, destination marketing has often complimented these typologies with more specific brand attributes that include the physical environment, weather and food (Embacher and Buttle, 1989), or the creation of a geographical marketing mix (Ashworth and Voogt, 1989) focusing on promotion, spatial-functional measures, organisational measures and financial aspects, whilst Kotler, Haider and Rein (2002) have developed a model of place improvement which embraces place as a character, the fixed environment, service provision and the entertainment or recreational value. Hubbard and Hall (1998) further include aspects such as cultural regeneration, large-scale physical redevelopments and mega events. Hankinson (2004) has proposed a Relationship Network Brand Model for destination branding, with a core brand personality, around which are placed elements such as the brand infrastructure, primary services, consumer relationships and media relationships.

However, a critical element of this exercise is that a complementary association must exist between different facets that represent a place's real identity, traditional values and inherent characteristics. These also include culture and heritage, investments, governance, people (Anholt, 2000); change (Laaksonen , 2006: Anholt, 2004, 2007) branding campaigns (Berkowitz, *et.al.* 2007; Anholt and Hildreth, 2004; Nuthavuthisit, 2007; Trueman, *et.al.*

2004); stakeholders that include both place brand developers/creators and brand users (Hankinson, 2004; Morgan, *et.al.* 2004; Vausdevan, 2008), efforts to overcome negative perceptions and eradicating issues (Kotler, *et.al.* 1993); sustainable growth prospects (Konecnik and Go, 2007; Kotler and Gertber, 2004; Morgan et al 2004; Stock, 2009; de Chernatony 2006), logistics (Pryor and Grossbart, 2007); Bergqvist, 2009); regeneration (Pryor and Grossbart, 2007; Morgan et al ., 2004: Anholt, (2005, 2007) and world-class city status (Skinner and Kubacki, 2007; Hemmingway, 2007, Kavartzis, 2005; Anholt 2004) .

Some of these place brand dimensions are further exemplified in the case of Liverpool (see Table 4.1)

Table 4.1 - Place brand dimensions-

Dimension	Academic reference	Description	Examples of developments in Liverpool
Change	Laaksonen, <i>et.al.</i> (2006); Anholt, (2004; 2007)	restructuring overall framework of a place in terms of its identity and image	Better accessibility, New brand image, Enhanced business opportunities, High property market, Awareness & Interest – increasing number of visitors both leisure and business
Regeneration	Pryor and Grossbart, (2007); Morgan <i>et.al.</i> (2004); Anholt, (2005; 2007)	repositioning a place's physical outlook by encompassing major development and facilities	City region redevelopment, The Big Dig, The Edge Lane project, Tangible benefits with more attractions, Economic stimulus
Stakeholders	Vausdevan, (2008)	authorities responsible for creating and delivering a place's brand	TMP, NWDA, City Council, public and private sectors, residents and businesses
Major events & headlines	Nobili, (2005); Berkowitz <i>et.al.</i> (2007)	hosting large, well-known and prestigious events attracting global	European Capital of Culture, The Garden Festival, Events such as

		attention	Tall ships, Mathew Street Festival, Music bringing in a lot of visitors and therefore much needed income
Attributes & Associations	Fullerton, (2007); Amine and Chao, (2005); Cassel, (2008); Aaker, (1996)	relates to the perceptions that an individual, organisation or an entity holds for a place that encapsulates its image and name in a nutshell	Emotional, Functional, Judgemental, Symbolic and Cognitive associations; Civic pride
Capacity	Gertner, (2007); van Ham, (2008); Coaffee and van Ham, (2008)	ability to serve needs and demands of both associated and potential mass	Safety and Security, Employment, Education, Household facilities, Transportation and others
Capability	Harmaakorpi, <i>et.al.</i> (2008)	is the drive that demonstrates great self-belief and enormous aspiration towards development and achievement	Highly competitive, Strong Brand Identity and Attractiveness
Sustainable growth	Kotler and Gertner, (2004); Morgan <i>et.al.</i> (2004); Anholt, (2005; 2007), Stock, (2009); de Chernatony, (2006)	developments that provide continuous opportunities and benefits for prospective brand extension	Improved skills training provisions, business opportunities, better housing facilities, modernised lifestyle standards, hi-tech infrastructure and committed governance and residents (people) acting as true ambassadors
Logistics	Pryor and Grossbart, (2007); Bergqvist,	infrastructure and miscellaneous facilities that are crucial for	New Arena and BT convention centre, Cruise Liner terminal, huge

	(2009)	sustainability and generating positive attributes	improvements at John Lennon airport attracting international carriers such as KLM, formation of M62 corridor, research and innovation centres such as LSTM – all these providing better accessibility and highly rated brand image perceptions.
World-class status	Skinner and Kubacki, (2007); Hemingway, (2007); Kavartzis, (2005); Anholt, (2004)	global recognition and inclusion in the list of most favourable places to visit, work and settle down	UNESCO's World heritage site – Magnificent waterfronts, the monumental Grade II listed buildings, wonderful architecture, traditionally rich cultural and artistic history, well-known brand association such as The Hilton and The Crown Plaza, sporting legacies of LFC & EFC, The Beatles and 'The history of Titanic at the Maritime Museum'

This chapter further discusses some of the key facets of the place brand in detail.

4.8.1 History, Culture & Heritage and Values

According to Bianchini and Ghilardi, (2007) place brands are novel entities and are unidentical to the conventional/traditional brands and marketing props used for marketing retail products like cars, cheese or a fizzy drink. They further suggest Murray's (2001) interdisciplinary and creative approach to understand places as complex and multi-faceted cultural identities. In this context, Hornskov, (2007) believes history, culture and values of a place to be the centre of place brand. Therefore, place brands cannot be studied without consideration of the cultural aspects of a place which is involved in persuading consumers to identify the legitimacy of its brand.

Moreover, the main reason why places like New York, San Francisco, Barcelona, Paris, London, Sydney, Venice and few others, stand out as '*cultural meccas*', is because of their distinguished cultural features such as great universities, unrivalled architecture, musical

and artistic history and traditions, museums, orchestra, libraries and theatres (Kotler, *et.al.* 1993:127). These cultural institutions do not just entertain the residents but attract tourists and generate opportunities of growth within, making a call to the brand developers, to make a special effort in promoting the cultural assets of a place. A place's historical values and its inherent cultural identity also help in communicating to the rest of the world, this, consciously or sub-consciously creates the reputation of its brand (Anholt, 2007). He further suggests that in the minds of consumer, culture also works in different ways as a symbol for personality, and consumers deduce a great deal about the deep-rooted qualities of a place through its cultural ventures. For example, sporting legacies demonstrates the strength, courage, physical prowess, agility, determination, team spirit, honour, fair play while music and arts suggest creativity, imagination, traditions, liveliness and a sense of fun and architectural monuments displays authentic values and image of a place.

Furthermore, a place's real brand identity lies in its cultural roots and is inextricably connected to its cultural identity and traditional norms (Anderson, 1991) making culture and historical values to be conceived as key facets registered to deliver place branding, via any promotional strategies on the global platform (Hornskov, 2007). Also, cultural and historical interpretations of a place provide a sound holistic foundation that unifies a place's image through its representation in the media, through direct experiences of consumers, through viral marketing, and so on (Olins, 2003; Caldwell and Freire, 2004) suggesting 'Culture and History' to be one of the focal points of place branding.

4.8.2 Role of stakeholders

In order to manage and maintain a place's brand successfully, a place must engage all its stakeholders in carrying out varied branding activities, outlining positive features of a place's identity (Anholt, 2007). These could include governmental authorities and policy makers involved in drawing out appropriate regulations incorporating growth prospects, tourist boards and key brand developers working behind raising an attractive profile of the place, investment authorities and developmental agencies looking into generating income and funding resources to enhance business opportunities, local residents generating a sense of civic pride and belief for their place and continuously engaging cultural and artistic heritage as a bridge to connect to a diverse target audience.

This has generated a need to develop a new area of operation within places that is characterised by active participation, cooperation and interaction between public, private and governance stakeholders as the issues of the varied nature and extent may involve multiple stakeholders, in order to be resolved and therefore, cannot be dealt with traditional decision making process that were used in the past (van Gelder, 2008). The effort to develop new forms of organisation to tackle the common issues of leadership, lack of responsiveness, lack of direction, and conflict-dealings, that are often hard to overcome, can only be successful through collaboration, coalitions, alliances and partnerships between stakeholders that are established in different capacities within a place. The interactive place brand framework of partnership working has encouraged stakeholders to take joint responsibility for defying and implementing strategies resulting in better functioning, self-driven, highly competitive, society-committed and self-confident places. In addition, this has also helped to deal with the problems that were sensitive, tend to shift over time and are perhaps irresolvable for a single stakeholder, certainly for the one that tends to frame its answers to problems in terms of policies, strategies, legislation, civic welfare and taxation (Placebrands, 2008).

Therefore, if a place successfully manages to accomplish stakeholder cooperation and involvement, then branding of that place has a chance to thrive, develop and prosper (Farrell, 2008).

4.8.3 Place and its perceptions

The perceptions of a place are resultant notions about its image that are generated from the characteristic features of its brand which reflects the degrees of strength and/or weakness in terms of what consumers are searching for (Kotler, *et.al.* 1993). In addition, perceptions are also developed through personal experiences and promotional mediums such as advertising and branding campaigns and media propagation. What is critical, however, is how this message is transformed and processed, via mental processes of cognition, to form certain images of a place (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001). Furthermore, consumer's attitudes, values and their consequent expectations from a place, also creates perceptions about a place (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). However, in order to generate positive perceptions of a place, the place must promote an image that is realistic, simple, believable, appealing, unique and competitive (Kotler, *et.al.* 1993), which, points to the need to incorporate a process that can effectively deliver it.

In this context, Kavaratzis and Ashworth, (2006) suggest that a place brand acts as a catalyst in creating consumer's perceptions and images, and further puts them at the heart of coordinated activities planned to shape the place and its future. Moreover, Anholt (2003), argues that successful branding can unite a place and a people, while also fostering economic development and creates an emotional bond with consumers, as a result of its distinctive characteristics (Youde, 2009). He further gives an example of 'Brand South Africa Campaign' – a co-stakeholder administered programme implemented by International Marketing Council of South Africa to achieve specific political, economic and social objectives. This had helped in eradicating negative images of 'war, poverty, famine and flies' (Gates, 1999) which has essentially become an image that covers the entire continent and negatively impacts the region's ability to attract investment, promote tourism or play a meaningful role in international politics.

According to Gold (2006) some specific branding strategies should be implemented for a place to both further prosper and sustain the existing brand or to overcome its negative image. In contrast, the place brand strategies should not be a short-term marketing cure to aid a struggling place brand but instead should focus on long-term growth, regeneration, and sustainable economic development for the future (Anholt and Hildreth, 2003). Hence, Papadopolous, (2004) proposed a government intervention into place brand strategy by developing a holistic political and social process that networks all the major stakeholders and then implement a consistent branding message that precisely reflects positive political, social, cultural and economic aspects of the place in question. In addition, place branding is a form of effective management of the attributes about a place by the key regulatory authorities and stakeholders both locally and beyond. According to Cooper and Momani, (2009) place branding further attempts to overcome negative attributes and tries to project an opportunistic profile of a place that is open for new businesses and investments, and that offers political stability and moderation. Therefore, it is understood that perceptions of places can be directly influenced by communications, and consumers can be persuaded through one form of positive expression of an image or another to alter their opinions about countries, cities, places or regions (Anholt, 2009). However, there is a concern that most of the place brand campaigns fail to consider many less attractive aspects of the place — for example deprivation, unemployment, crime and high costs of living — are ignored because obviously

these aspects are not going to be considered attractive or interesting by the branding authorities (Ooi, 2008).

This ignorance can only be avoided with the implementation of strategically planned and effectively coordinated place brand campaigns that consider every facet of a place equal in order to develop future growth prospects.

4.8.4 Major events and branding campaigns

According to Hankinson, (2005) the strategic importance of place brands increased dramatically in recent times and has extended its relevance beyond commonly targeted aspects of inward investments and visitors for tourism purposes, to include efforts in retaining confidence of residents, attracting new residents, generating skills development and training provisions, business support and entrepreneur opportunities for a location. These comprise a range of branding and promotional campaigns undertaken by regulating authorities such as those associated with the bidding quest to host specific events, may it be a campaign to host 'Olympic Games', 'World Athletics Championships', 'Soccer, Rugby or Cricket World Cup' (Garcia, 2005) or to be a host as 'European Capital of Culture City', in order to achieve valuable prestige and unprecedented investments (Gold and Gold, 2008). In addition, these 'mega-events' and 'festivals' may achieve sufficient size and scope to affect the host place's economy and foster sustained global media attention (Roche, 2000).

In the context of this research, Nobili, (2005) specifically points to the 'European Capital of Culture' and suggests that becoming a host to this prestigious event in the Europe is an achievement, as it triggers positive attributes and extraordinary engagement of stakeholders enhancing the branding effort that could last in perpetuity. Since this research focuses on a re-branding campaign associated with the '*European Capital of Culture*' (ECoC), then some background is a prerequisite. European Capital of Culture (ECoC) is a title given to a European city for a length of one year providing it an excellent opportunity to demonstrate its culture and heritage, arts and music, and other creative developments. This is a unique opportunity for that city to shine and make its mark on the global platform by holding a range of cultural activities, events, festivals and artistic exhibitions that attract international interest. In addition, the city that holds the title gets financial support and assistance in terms of inward investments and commercial developments from the European Council funding authority and central, regional and local development agencies and governing authorities of

the host city. The benefits mentioned above have the potential to reshape a city or a place's image and brand, and thus makes ECoC arguably one of the most important European Union (EU) cultural programmes that attracts growing interest from leaders, policy makers, academics, researchers and most importantly the global media every year (Richards and Wilson, 2004).

Moreover, as a result of increased globalisation and subsequently limited resources, cities and places around the world are actively competing for recognition and status, and therefore, branding campaigns that involve bidding to host 'mega-events' such as 'ECoC', 'Olympics' and others have become even more intense as they attract substantial attention and provide excellent opportunities for places to make a significant impact on the world stage (Gold and Gold, 2008).

For example, ECoC 2008 gave the 'City of Liverpool' an excellent opportunity to showcase its culture and heritage, regenerated waterfronts, proud history as a 'port city', investment and business opportunities, and its iconic Grade I and II listed buildings that sets it apart from many other European cities and attracts both business and leisure visitors from all over the world (Liverpool 08, 2009). In addition, both the internal and external financial boost from EU funding, Regional Development Agency and inward investments have accelerated the overall regeneration of the city at an unprecedented rate (with more than £3bn being invested in major projects), and changed the physical outlook of the place forever. These include the £1bn shopping centre, Liverpool One (L1), and the £800m generated from a five-year investment of £125m, plus income generated from 3.5 million first-time visitors to the city in 2008 (BBC News, 2009).

Previous ECoC cities have also seen substantial benefits: Cork in Ireland (ECoC in 2005) demonstrates an outstanding legacy of economic success that greatly exceeded the expectations with total revenue investments of around € 170m and direct financial contributions from visitors in 2005 which amounted to € 414m (Chorcai, 2007). These further facilitated the development and strengthening of the City's cultural and artistic infrastructure and other prospective initiatives. More recently, Vilnius received the ECoC title in e 2009 and has witnessed intense development of the city, with an expansion of cultural and leisure facilities estimated at € 0.5 billion and the further development of the new centre of Vilnius which is expected to attract another € 800 m in the near future (The City Municipality, 2009).

The above examples outline the importance of hosting- 'mega-events' such as 'ECoC' and further demonstrates the exceptional levels of inward investment and physical transformation, which can attract a more diverse target audience and generate positive images via continuous media presence. As a result, these developments and opportunities could become fundamental aspects of sustainable growth of a place, in future. The following sub-section discusses the role of place branding in sustainable development.

4.8.5 Sustainable development

There are often uncertainties and complexities observed in carrying out place brand campaigns due to the limited funds and tangible resources. This has the effect of restricting awareness-raising and limits the differentiation of the place brand to the mere propagation of logos, symbols and strap-lines (Hankinson, 2001). Hankinson's report also indicates that cities and places successful in attracting appropriate resources have however, succeeded in developing positive brand images that are linked, for example, to attributes such as heritage and history, the spirit and sense of belief in local residents, associations with specific legacies and attractive place-specific facets. In particular, the development of positive brand images such as these has led to the successful transformation of several post-industrial cities, such as New York, Amsterdam and Glasgow, into vibrant leisure and business tourism destinations (Ward, 1998). However, due to the multiplicity of the stakeholders and lack of responsibility and leadership in carrying out place branding programmes may lead to the unequal distribution of resources, and benefits, which arguably, has happened in Liverpool.

Liverpool'08 has been a widespread brand campaign carried out in order to regenerate and re-brand the 'City of Liverpool' in order to create a lively and vibrant city for the future even after 2008, its designated year of 'European Capital of Culture', (Liverpool08, 2008). However, given the diversity of stakeholders involved in branding the place, there are a variety of perceptual perspectives towards the place brand and its inter-relationship with local authorities, public sectors, local businesses, residents, inward investors and other commercial actors within the 'City of Liverpool'. Moreover, they act in a variety of ways, sometimes synergistically, sometimes in conflict and may be directly or indirectly driving or shaping the branding campaign, depending on their individual perspectives on place brand.

However, the link between place brand programmes and its impact on sustainable development has received little attention. Indeed, as noted by Jevons (2005:118):

“...the bottom line question that is often unasked is whether our understanding of what brands are, and what branding does, is much clearer as a result of all the research that has been published...”

In the case of place brands, and particularly from other cities who have gained “European Capital of Culture” status, there is a dearth of research and very little evidence that the place brand drives sustainable growth facets such as inward investment, business and employment opportunities, increasingly improving lifestyle standards, positive media propagation promoting the local infrastructure, logistics, advanced facilities and true characteristics (The Mersey Economic Review, 2008).

4.9 Concluding remarks and the centrality of place brands within this study.

Exploring the place brand construct is a central theme of this research, and understanding the multi-dimensions is a key component. How these interact, their relative importance and their role in sustaining place image are fundamental to this study. It is apparent that most authors (Hankinson, 2004, 2005; Morgan, *et.al.* 2004, Anholt, 2006, de Chernatony, 2006; Baker and Cameron, 2008; Farrell, 2008), agree that place branding is a multidimensional construct and there are numerous models which describe the component parts. However, these models fail to describe the interaction between the facets nor their relative importance and interaction with each other (Vandewalle and Phadke, 2008) and in short, fail to match the dynamism of place brands themselves. Several of the models purport to describe a brand hierarchy (e.g. Brand prisms), whereby, perceptions are somehow weighted (particularly emotional concepts such as brand resonance, which then appear at the apex of such models). However, there is no empirical evidence that this reflects the natural perception of either the brand creators or of the brand users. Current place brand models therefore appear to be fundamentally flawed and do not provide the robust theoretical foundation on which to proceed to investigate place brands themselves.

This review indicates that the Place Brand construct is not only multifaceted and complex, but that the liminalities of the brand itself are poorly defined. Whatever the case, this thesis

argues that a place brand cannot be expressed by such simplistic models (with five or six facets) nor can theory be developed using such limited constructs.

This thesis argues that in order to make sense of the place brand (and the on-going place brand processes) then the leading figures and key authorities who influence (or, who at this stage are considered to influence) the brand should to be questioned in depth about the place brand construct and the inter-relationships of the various component parts.

It would be wrong, then to start with a pre-determined view of the component parts, and so instead, this thesis starts with the people who might influence the brand itself. Nonetheless, it is clear that those key individuals who are interviewed must determine, or at least influence, those various facets described above (section 4.8).

4.10 Summary of literature review

Summarizing the existing branding literature, a brand is identified as a consistent group of characteristics, images (Kavartazis and Ashworth, 2006), reputation (Farrell, 2008) or emotions (Martinez, *et.al.* 2008) that consumers recall or experience when they think of a specific symbol, product, service, organization or location. Brand recognition occurs when consumers generally know brand qualities (Godheswar, 2008). If a brand has accumulated widespread positive sentiment among consumers, marketers say that its owner has acquired brand equity- the ability to retain current customers and attract new ones (Pike, 2005; Elliot and Percy, 2007; Keller, 2008). Consequently, over time, brands can create significant value for their holder (Kotler and Gertner, 2004).

However, the case of '*Place branding*' is different and in contrast to the ordinary branding concepts as it is a multidimensional construct (Hankinson, 2005), without a single ownership and gives inconsistent messages throughout various consumer segments in the market. Place branding is identified as multifaceted due to its diverse stakeholders: there is no single owner of the brand, but in fact, all stakeholders influence the brand. Those stakeholders include for instance local authorities, Chamber of Commerce, local residents, the media, business and commercial entities. Moreover, at the same time a 'Place Brand' has multiple consumers such as business and leisure tourists, commuters, inward investors, event organizers, managers and residents (Aaker, 1996) all of whom may have conflicting wants and needs. In addition, numerous place-embedded assets that represent characteristic features of a place undoubtedly need a consideration, in place branding efforts. For example, current perceptions of the

historical traditional port trade, the cultural inheritance, the past music scene, the architectural heritage and the sporting legacies of Liverpool all impact on the contemporary city's image as well, all of which contribute to the nostalgic component of the place brand.

Furthermore, a place brand strategy determines the most realistic, most competitive and most compelling strategic vision for the city, region, or country, and ensures that this vision is supported, reinforced and enriched by every act of investment and communication between that place and the rest of the world (Placebrands, 2006). Place branding as a strategic marketing activity has increased significantly over the last quarter century (Ward, 1998). Its application now extends beyond the traditional areas of inward investment and leisure tourism to include a wider role in attracting new residents, new employees and business tourists to a location (Baker and Cameron, 2008). Place branding includes both short-term campaigns such as those associated with bids to host specific events – for example, Sidney's successful bid to host the Olympic Games – as well as longer-term repositioning strategies as exemplified in the recent nomination of Liverpool as the 'European City of Culture' for 2008 (Nobili, 2005).

In this context, the literature reviewed has established that branding not only applies to cities, regions and countries, but also applies lower down the spatial scale (Ashworth and Voogt, 1994; Konecnik and Go, 2007), to places such as shopping destinations and leisure parks. It thus covers a wide area of activities and locations and involves a wide range of stakeholders from both the public and private sectors (Youde, 2009). As a consequence, the study of place branding also extends across a wide area of academic interest (Hankinson, 2001). Just as product and service brands generate sets of expectations or images of a place prior to consumption so too do destination and place brands (Metelka, 1981; Anholt, 2004). In this context, brand developers and creators can track progress and identify the required development aspects for a destination using tools such as the destination brand development (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009) in Chapter Three.

Moreover, the above literature lists numerous publications highlighting place branding and its benefits; however, there have been a clear gap in literature in terms of establishing significance of place branding in sustainable growth and development. A handful of publications (Pederson, 2004; Ryan and Zahra, 2004; Pant, 2005) suggest that there is a definite relationship between successful place branding programmes and sustainability, but

all are specific in their focus and none propose generic models indicating strong empirical investigation showing the interrelationship between these constructs. As a result, sustainable development is still considered in terms of achieving increased visitor numbers, a modernised infrastructure and generates inward investments. Although, there are some similarities between these place-specific facets, there is a need to implement different place branding strategies when it comes to the overall sustainability of the place.

Whilst the practice of marketing places and place branding (discussed in Chapter Three and Four) has been around for some time, as a research area, it is clearly an emerging field that is evolving alongside complementary (although distinct) areas of destination, country and nation branding. Even so, place branding research, in particular, is in its infancy. There are relatively few empirical findings and inconsistencies in terminology and meaning.

It is clear then, that the place branding construct needs further research. Moreover, there is scant research which investigates the relationship between place branding and its impact on sustainable growth and development, and again, the research to date fails to clearly identify the relationships and importance of the various constructs and components.

This research therefore sets out to examine further the place branding construct; its component parts and their relative importance. It then seeks to establish the relationship and importance between place branding and sustainability of the place.

Chapter 5: Methodology

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an understanding of the different research philosophies, approaches, researcher's orientation and data gathering techniques that could be applied to place branding research and especially to this project. Moreover, this chapter critically evaluates a variety of research approaches in order to identify the most suitable approach to this project. This chapter also highlights use of secondary research such as 'desk research' (research that involves collecting data that is freely accessible on the internet, from published journals, in printed newspapers and magazine reviews, and in publications of private and public sector entities involved in place branding) and documents published by Regional Development Agency, TMP, Liverpool Vision, Impacts'08 and Cushman and Wakefield and research conducted by different places within UK, Europe and globally such as Glasgow, Sibiu, Bradford, Thailand, Malaysia and others. The use of secondary research facilitated the understanding of previous research in the field of place branding and further enabled the critical evaluation of this research to identify specific concepts and their relationship trends that could substantiate the themes developed from this thesis. Finally, it outlines the importance of research design and method, which have been used, a rationale of why they were adopted and a description of how it was implemented, in this research.

5.1 Research philosophies

The following section describes different aspects of philosophical knowledge of research that is equally important to consider while carrying out research in any context.

5.1.1 Philosophy of knowledge

There seems to be a misconception in considering knowledge interchangeably with information. The various definitions of knowledge suggest that it is much more than information. Grey, (1996) purports that, knowledge is the full utilisation of information and data, coupled with the potential of people skills, inputs, competencies, creativity, intuition, commitment and motivation.

However, it is necessary to view knowledge on the basis of its final use and/or on the basis of the context of its use (Carrillo, *et.al.* 2000). In highlighting the end use, Beckman (1997) defines knowledge as reasoning about information and data to actively enable performance,

problem-solving, decision-making, learning and teaching. Therefore, information becomes knowledge when it enters the system and when it is validated both collectively and individually as a valid, relevant and useful piece of knowledge to implement in the research system of a project (Blumentritt and Johnston, 1999) i.e. knowledge can be derived from information, it presupposes information, and information presupposes the data. Therefore, the key to this is its 'interpretation'; a person receives data and information from the surrounding interactive and assumed and/or derived research environment and through its interpretation, knowledge is created (Davenport and Prusak, 2000).

Moreover, a further debate concerning the way in which scientific knowledge is developed and influences our understanding of management and business research, arises from the thesis developed by Gibbons, *et.al.* (1994). In this, they list two contrasting categories or modes of knowledge production in contemporary society: one, where knowledge production is actively driven by an academic agenda and discoveries tend to build upon existing knowledge in linear fashion, and two, the trans-disciplinarily research which causes the boundaries of a single contributing disciplines to be exceeded. In this form of research, the results are closely related to the relevant context and may not necessarily be replicated; therefore, knowledge production is less of a linear process, unlike to the former mode.

These debates and above discussions about the interpretation and development of knowledge frames a series of questions about nature and purpose of management and business research and its relationships to the theories. The following sub-section defines theory and research and further explains the linkage between the two.

5.2 Theory and research

According to Bryman and Bell, (2007) the term 'theory' is often used in different ways but most commonly it is applied to explain the meaning of observed regularities occurring within a 'phenomena'. However, theories such as structural-functionalism (Pope, 1975), symbolic interactionism (Bulmer, 1986), critical theory (Kellner, 1989) and structuralism (Pope, 1975), it is argued; do not in themselves constitute a theoretical perspective, which is characterised by a higher level of abstraction in relation to their relative research findings. These theories are narrated briefly below:

- 1) ***Structural-functionalism*** – Structural-functionalism is a consensus theory; a theory that sees society as built upon order, interrelation, and balance among parts as a means of maintaining the smooth functioning of the whole framework (Pope, 1975). Furthermore, he refers to Emile Durkheim's work and points out that, *Structural-Functionalism* views share norms and values as the basis of society, focus on social order based on unspoken agreements between groups and organizations, and views social change as occurring in a slow and orderly manner.
- 2) ***Symbolic interactionism*** – this theory refers to a relatively distinctive approach to the study of human group life and human conduct that rests within three simple premises (Bulmer, 1986): the first premise is that the human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from social interaction between humans and the third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things upon encountering it.
- 3) ***Critical theory*** - critical theory is the examination and critique of society and literature, drawing from knowledge across social science and humanities disciplines (Kellner, 1989).
- 4) ***Structuralism*** – structuralism, broadly considers, the theory that follows the notion that the mind actively structures perception or any other theory that follows the Emile Durkheim's attention to the social structure (Pope, 1975).

The theories that show ample relationship within its research findings are called 'theories of middle-range' and those that operate (all four as explained above) at a more abstract and general level are termed as 'grand theories' (Merton, 1967). He further explains that grand theories often offer less indications in guiding or influencing the collection of empirical evidence during the research, therefore researchers' found it very difficult to make the appropriate connection with the real world. This is due to the level of abstractness in testing a theory or drawing out a deduction. On the other hand, middle-range theories are:

"...intermediate to general theories of social systems which are too remote from particular classes of social behaviour, organisation and change to account for what is

observed and to those detailed orderly descriptions of particulars that are not generalised at all..."

(Merton 1967:39)

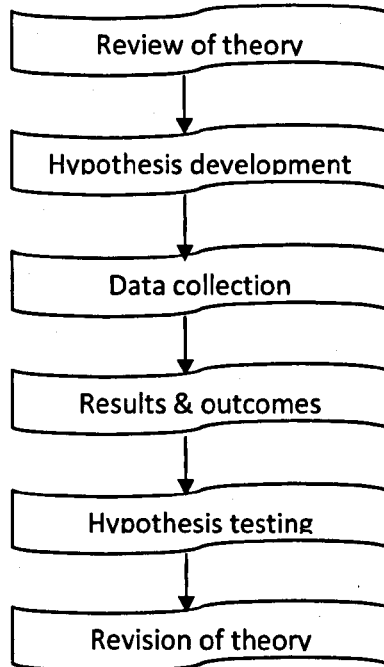
In this context, Bryman and Bell, (2007) suggested that middle-range theories are much more likely to be the focus of empirical enquiry in business and management research and not the grand theories. In addition, middle-range theories fall somewhere between the grand theories and the empirical findings and operate in a limited domain: unlike grand theories, they represent attempts to understand and derive a limited aspect of social life (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). Schoonhoven, (1981) suggests that middle-range theories have been widely used to understand the inter-relationship among subsystems, as well as relationships between an organisation and its environment, for example – the contingency theory (Willmott, 1990).

Moreover, it is also important to understand the relationship between research carried out and the underlying theories considered, and to be able to see if any part of that research is linked to the theory and what was the role of that theory. So far, the discussion above indicates that the theory is something that drives and directs the collection and analysis of data, suggesting that the research is carried out in order to answer the questions posed by the theoretical assumptions (Merton, 1967). However, there is another view to theory as something that is generated and developed after the collection and analysis of data associated with the respective research project (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Depending on one of the above views, makes it easier to clarify whether the research refers to a 'Deductive' or 'Inductive' theory while considering the relationship between theory and research. Clearly, the philosophical approach to this thesis is fundamentally inductive which is outlined in the discussion below.

5.2.1 Deductive v Inductive Research Positions

According to Bryman and Bell, (2003) 'Deductive' theory represents the most common view of the nature of relationship between theory and research. Deductive research is based on what is known about a particular domain, and of the theoretical considerations in relations to that domain. A hypothesis is then deduced which is subjected to empirical scrutiny, wherein embedded concepts will need to be translated into researchable constructs. The following Figure (5.1) lists the steps of a deductive theory research:

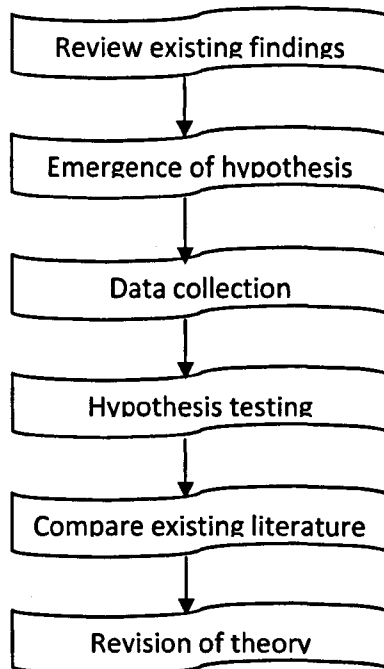
Figure 5.1: The deductive process



Source: Bryman and Bell, (2007)

Contrary to this, the rationale behind the 'Inductive' theory is the development and formation of explanations and theories about what has been observed (Gill and Johnson, 2002). Thus inductive research progresses by past observations and experiences, formulating abstract concepts and thus developing a theory that explains the past and predicts future experiences. In addition, Inductive research commonly uses a grounded theory approach to the analysis of data and to the generalisation of theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The following figure (5.2) lists the steps of an inductive theory research.

Figure 5.2: The inductive process



Source: Bryman and Bell, (2007)

In general then, a deductive strategy is associated with a quantitative research approach, while, an inductive strategy is usually associated with a qualitative research approach (Bryman and Bell, 2007). However, whilst these approaches represent the two ends of the relationship spectrum between research and theory, many researchers take a more blended approach to be more appropriate in order to incorporate the inference of the researcher's findings for the theory that prompted the whole exercise (Whittington, 1989). Furthermore, the Hawthorne studies undertaken at the Western Electric Company between 1927 and 1932 (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939) illustrates how a deductive approach can be modified by the intervention of the research itself, and generate alternative hypotheses which may then tend towards an inductive position (Schwartzman, 1993).

Indeed, many authors (such as Hammersely, 1996; Sieber, 1973; Jick, 1979 and Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003) consider that both approaches are appropriate as each of them facilitate each other in terms of data collection. For instance, Morgan, (1998) suggests a combination of '*Quantitative*' and '*Qualitative*' research methods as this would allow a range of strengths to be capitalised and weaknesses counterbalanced. He further stresses that carrying out research with only one selected method may not be sufficient to cover all the research perspectives due to the inherent limitations. There is recognition, then that '*Quantitative*' and

'Qualitative' research methodologies are each connected with distinctive epistemological and ontological assumptions (Bryman and Bell, 2007), making a combined research i.e. multi-strategy method both feasible and desirable. The main advantage of using mixed methods is that it enables '*triangulation*' to take occur while collecting data for the research (Saunders, *et.al.* 2007). For example, semi-structured interviews may be a valuable way of triangulating data collected by other means such a 'Likert-scale' questionnaire (Likert, 1932).

This research project also takes a more blended approach with a deductive strategy introduced at the initial stages to differentiate *place branding* from the existing pool of place marketing and destination branding literature and set up a research direction to understand the role of former in growth and development of a place, eventually tilting towards the inductive position (Schwartzman, 1993) to establish the relationship between the importance of place branding and sustainable growth, so as to contribute to the existing knowledge of subject area. Therefore, providing a justification to the rationale for not using logical deductive and objective approaches, throughout. This research therefore takes an '*Interpretivist*' approach (Bryman and Bell, 2007) rather than the more commonly applied '*Positivist*' research orientation (Goulding, 2002)

The next section puts more light on different types of research orientations and explains the choice of the orientation followed throughout this research study.

5.3 Epistemological research orientations

According to Bryman and Bell, (2007) an epistemological orientation is concerned with the question of what is and/or should be considered as the acceptable knowledge and further focuses on the aspect of whether or not the social world outside can be studied according to the same principles, following the same procedures, and considering similar philosophies as the natural sciences. It is important to understand the various epistemological positions discussed below, so as to identify a clear approach for this research study:

5.3.1 Positivism

It is the epistemological position that studies social reality by measuring independent and dependent variables and relating them through formal, usually statistical, models (Abbott, 1990). In addition, it also advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality (Leiter, 1999). Flick, (2009) suggest that '*Positivism*' originates

from the concepts of natural sciences and therefore is mostly used as a negative foil to distinguish one's own research from, however, this is rarely spelt out in social sciences discussions.

Also, positivism is quite often associated with '*realism*' (Flick, 2009) as both assume that natural and social sciences should and can apply similar principles to data collection and analysis and that there is an external (distinct) reality, unlike, our descriptions of it. However, Hammersley, (1996) argued that the word '*positivism*' itself is often criticised as it is often regarded with disapproval throughout the social literature. Although, when authors and researchers complain about the limitations of positivism, it is not entirely clear whether they mean the philosophy of science and social sciences or a scientific approach more generally. In addition, Bryman and Bell, (2007) also note that it would be a mistake to treat positivism as a synonym to science and scientific approach, as in fact, philosophers and experts of science and social sciences differ dramatically over how to characterise scientific practise appropriately and since the 1960s, it is drifting away from assuming it in positivist terms.

5.3.2 Realism

Bhaskar (1975) suggests that realism shares two assumptions with positivism: first, it is an epistemological position that believes that the natural and social sciences should and can apply the similar principles and approaches to collect and analyse the data and second, it commits to the view that there exists an external reality that is separate from our descriptions to it, to which the scientists and researchers direct their attention. According to Bhaskar, (1975: 250) there are two major forms of realism, namely Empirical Realism (which claims that the reality of the external world can be understood through the use of appropriate methods) and **Critical Realism** (which is a specific form of realism that aims to identify the reality of the natural order, and the dialogues of the social world. It notes that one would only be able to understand and eventually change the social world by accurate identification of the structures at work that generates those events and discourses).

5.3.3 Interpretivism

It is an epistemological position that completely contradicts the 'positivist' approach and its orthodoxy that has held for numbers of years (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The term considers the views of the authors who have been critical of the application of the scientific principles to the study of the social world and those who have been widely influenced by different

intellectual traditions. In addition, it supports the opinion of developing a working strategy that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and hence requires the social scientists to acquire the subjective understanding of the social actions (Halfpenny, 1987).

This emphasises the key difference between conducting research among people rather than objects. Interpretivism links back to two of the key intellectual traditions of *phenomenology* (Strauss, 1987) and *symbolic interactionism* (Bulmer, 1986) where the former refers to the ways in which we as humans make meaning of the surrounding world and the latter refers to the notion that we are in a continual process of interpreting the social world around us in terms of our interactions leading to the actions of others, eventually, adjusting our own meaning and actions (Saunders, *et.al.* 2007).

Moreover, Grint (2000) supports the interpretivist views by challenging much of the positivist principles that have tended to portray other studies of leadership through an example of 'Interpretivism into practise' – such as by arguing that effective leadership depends upon the management of subjective meaning and not the implementation of identical principles of the scientific models. In this context, Benton, (1977) reinforced the notion that leadership is committed to shaping the way the organisational difficulties are defined and persuading others that this definition is correct.

Thorpe and Holt, (2008) further suggest that interpretivist approaches are more descriptive and processual, unlike, positivist approaches which seek out underlying variables and causal factors only, therefore, the former providing a meaningful and subjective understanding to each aspect of social action than latter.

5.4 Ontological research orientations

Ontological considerations in a social setting are generally associated with the nature of social entities (Bryman, 2004). The key aspect of orientation within this is the understanding of the notion of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that actually possess a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social structures developed through the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman and Bell, 2007). These differentiations are frequently referred to respectively as '*objectivism*' and '*constructionism*' that are further differentiated using the most commonly

used terms in social science – organisation and culture. Both these ontological positions are further discussed in detail below:

5.4.1 Objectivism

Hazelrigg, (1986) suggests '*objectivism*' is an ontological position that takes as given an objective world of determinant qualities i.e. the world in which each object exists independently of any external relationship to any particular observer, and therefore is similar to all observers. Any object of this objective-world is identically available to all the observers in principle precisely because it is a 'self-identical' presence. In other words, '*objectivism*' is an ontological position that maintains that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is openly independent of social actors (Bryman and Bell, 2007). *Objectivism* further implies that social occurrences and the categories that we use in day to day dialogue have an existence that is independent or separate from the actors themselves.

5.4.2 Constructivism

Represents a variety of epistemological positions (i.e. Social Constructivism (Thorpe and Holt, 2008), Radical Constructivism (Hess, 1997), Moderate Constructivism (Kwan and Tsang, 2001) and Personal or philosophical Constructivism (Piaget, 1972)) in which the social reality is seen as the result of the constructive processes (Flick, 2009). For example: performing a certain research task, utilising a particular amount of resources can be influenced by the way the researchers see their task: which meaning they ascribe to it, and how this research task is seen by other members of the social world. On each of these levels, the research task and performing it with available resources are socially constructed.

Furthermore, Hazelrigg, (1986) argues that constructivism involves the constituting activity of consciousness, which in turn develops the structures and attributes of our perceptual world. He further adds that 'consciousness' is integral to the world we live in, rather than a secondary aspect, which develops perceptions of the world through lived experiences. It further entails that social phenomena and the categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a state of continuous revision (Kwan and Tsang, 2001).

As a result, Constructivism proposes a different phenomenology from that of 'Objectivism' as it continuously challenges the suggestion that categories such as organisation and culture are pre-given and therefore confront social actors as external realities that they have no role in conditioning (Strauss, 1973).

5.5 Relationship between epistemological and ontological orientations

Bryman and Bell, (2007) suggest that the questions of social ontology cannot be separated from the aspects concerning the conduct of business research. In addition, ontological considerations and commitments actually hold the key in the formulation of the research questions and the research approach to be carried out. In this context, if the research questions are formulated in such a way that it hints that organisations and the culture are objective social entities that act on the individuals, then the research is likely to adopt 'positivist' (Abbot, 1990) and 'objectivist' (Hazelrigg, 1986) approaches in terms of its execution, emphasising the properties of organisations or the values of the members of the culture. On the other hand, if the researcher formulates a research portfolio so that the weakness of organisation and culture as objective categories is stressed, it is likely that an emphasis will be placed on the active involvement of people in the construction of reality thus adopting an 'interpretivist' (Halfpenny, 1987) epistemological and 'constructivist' (Flick, 2009) ontological considerations.

Therefore, in either of the above cases, depending on the respective relationship between epistemological and ontological orientation considered, different approaches to the design of research and collection of data might be required. This is summarised in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Research strategy differentiation

Basic differences between quantitative and qualitative research strategies		
Aspects of research philosophy	Quantitative	Qualitative
Relationship between theory and research	Deductive approach – testing the theory	Inductive approach-generation of theory
Epistemological orientation	Positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological orientation	Objectivism	Constructionism

Source: Bryman and Bell, (2007)

Moreover, Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest an exposition of the four '*paradigms*', which may be a key influence on understanding the relationship of epistemological and ontological foundations of business research, as it reflects the assumptions that researchers make about the nature of the 'research subject or organisation' and how we find out about them. In this context, a *paradigm* is:

'a cluster of beliefs and viewpoints which for scientists in particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research can be carried out and how findings and outcomes should be interpreted'

(Bryman, 1998:4)

Burrell and Morgan's (1979) use of the notion of paradigm reflects the work of Thomas Kuhn (1970) and suggests that each paradigm position in their 'paradigm-framework' presents assumptions that may be regarded as:

- a) *objectivist* – this paradigm assumes that there is an external viewpoint from which it is possible to observe an entity, which is made up of consistently real processes and structures; or
- b) *subjectivist* – this paradigm assumes that an entity is a socially constructed entity, commonly used by the individuals to make meaning of their social experience, so that it can be better understood only from the viewpoint of the individuals who are directly associated in its activities.

The two positions above provide a framework for the identification of a relative paradigm position, on the basis of the researcher's assumptions, for the study of organisations which are discussed below:

- c) *functionalist* - this is the dominant constituent position for the study of organisations that leads to the rational explanation based on problem-solving orientation;
- d) *interpretivist*- this paradigm position questions whether a organisation exists in any real sense beyond conceptions of social actors, so the understanding must be based on the experience of those who are involved within it.

As a result, the research generates different types of organisational and/or project analysis for each paradigm, as each seeks to address specific research questions in a different way. In fact, the paradigm position also directs the respective research design and the specific components to be considered while executing it (Bell and Bryamn, 2007). Therefore, it is very important to clarify the philosophical orientations of a research project and equally to establish an appropriate 'paradigm' position, based on the relationship between epistemological and ontological orientations (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The following sub-section outlines the

researcher's approach in terms of considering the philosophical orientations and paradigm position for this thesis.

5.6 The Philosophical Approach to this study

Gill and Johnson, (2002) claim that researchers are often confronted with a philosophical choice regarding the nature of human actions and its descriptions, while undertaking a project, and that this has direct methodological implications. Therefore, whatever set of philosophical assumptions a researcher implicitly or explicitly adopts to undertake a particular project, as a result of the influence of '*human nature*', would eventually lead to the subsequent choice of particular '*modes of engagement*' and views warranted towards the research (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:6). So for example if a researcher adopts the philosophical assumptions of positivism (Abbott, 1990) and its constituent epistemological prescriptions such as objectivism (Hazelrigg, 1986), the research is invariably drawn towards the exclusive utilization of nomothetic (study of groups of individuals) methodology in an attempt to draw general conclusions of the research subject (Hermans, 1988).

Conversely, if the researcher's philosophical orientation follows an 'interpretivist' (Thorpe and Holt, 2008) approach followed by the ensuing epistemological position of 'constructivism' (Flick, 2009), then this drives the research towards a more ideographic methodology (Hermans, 1988), i.e. the study of the behaviours that makes individuals unique. These studies include individual interviews and ethnography since this enables '*verstehen*' – the sympathetic understanding of the frames of reference and interpretation of the meaning out of which specific human behaviour arises (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

With reference to the above discussions about relationships between various ontological positions alongside their constituent epistemological orientations, the researcher stresses that, as the subject of place branding and its role and importance in sustainable development, in particular, requires the in-depth understanding of the behaviour of various social actors (for example, the key stakeholders and governing authorities, involved in creating, developing and using the place brand) then this research project considers a philosophical orientation that follows an 'interpretivist' (Thorpe and Holt, 2008) approach, complimented with an epistemological position of 'constructivism' (Flick, 2009) through the implementation of ideographic methodology (Hermans, 1988).

Moreover, the initial investigation in this research could have been made with a survey of the 'user cohorts' i.e. tourists, residents and visitors, etc. during pilot stages, however, this fails to give insights into how place brands are constructed and applied and would simply be the 'user perspective' of a place. Therefore, this research takes an 'interpretivist' approach that allows an in-depth investigation of the key constructs as understood and interpreted by the principle stakeholders i.e. those who are involved in developing and delivering the brand. It is argued that this approach is more likely to give insights into place brand construction, management and underlying inter-relationships, than simply obtaining user perspectives. Indeed, this research does not omit or disregard the 'user' perspective: these views are captured via the principle stakeholders who are constantly collecting these views to construct the brand.

5.7 Research strategies

It is to be noted that the formulation of the research questions, on the basis of the pre-defined specific research objectives, and the way those questions are asked would result in collection of descriptive, exploratory or explanatory responses, during data collection phase (Saunders, *et.al.* 2007). In this context, alongside the above identification, a researcher also needs to understand the purpose of the research that has to be carried out which has a threefold classification in terms of explanatory, exploratory and descriptive studies. However, as the research progresses, it can result into developing more than one purpose, for example, both descriptive and explanatory research might be employed and therefore, the purpose of enquiry may change over time (Robson, 2002). The following is the description about undertaking a respective study to fulfil a relevant research purpose:

5.7.1 Exploratory study – is the collection of information about 'what is happening; it aims to find out more about certain aspects of discussion; to ask questions and to examine certain criteria from a different angle' (Robson, 2002:59). It clarifies further understanding of a problem if there is any uncertainty within the nature of the problem. According to Saunders, *et.al.* (2007) exploratory research can be conducted in following three ways:

- A thorough search of the existing literature;
- Carrying out interviews with the 'experts' or key people in the research area;
- Conducting focus group interviews.

The main benefit of the exploratory research is that it is completely flexible and adaptable to change (Adams and Schvaneveldt, 1991) and therefore it can lead to changing the research approach as a result of new and unexpected data that may appear, and new understandings of the research criteria that may be acquired. However, Adam and Schvaneveldt, (1991), argued that the incorporated flexibility and easy adaptability does not mean the nonexistence of direction to the enquiry, but that these characteristics actually broaden the focus at the beginning of the research and makes it progressively narrow as the research advances. For example, Kavaratzis and Ashworth's (2006) exploratory study of 'City branding' that initially uses contemporary marketing theories and practices to assist in determining how product branding can be transformed to city branding as an important brand-image building strategy and then progressing further to critically understand the meaning of 'city branding' as perceived by its administrators and regulators. They further went on to critically examine the use of city branding so that a conceptual framework for an effective place branding strategy, in particular, can be developed.

5.7.2 Confirmatory study – A Confirmatory Study is one that progresses by considering a series of alternatives via *a priori* hypotheses related to the concepts of interest within the research subject, followed by the development of research design which is mostly experimental, (Bryman and Bell, 2007) to test those hypotheses. The data collection and analysis, finally supports the researcher's inductive conclusions (Jaeger and Halliday, 1998). Moreover, explicit hypotheses examined by confirmatory studies are not usually generated from a rational void but rather gained through exploratory research (Platt, 1964).

Therefore, exploratory approaches to research can be used to generate hypotheses that later can be tested with confirmatory studies (Jaeger and Halliday, 1998). In addition, on one hand, confirmatory research studies are often experimental (Platt, 1964), while on the other hand, exploratory research studies may be either experimental or observational (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

5.7.3 Descriptive study – This main objective of this type of study is to portray an accurate profile of persons, scenarios or activities that are involved within the research topic (Robson, 2002). These studies can always be used as an extension to exploratory research or may be carried out prior to employing explanatory research. This type of study makes it easier to understand a particular research subject for which relevant data needs to be collected (prior to

the actual collection of data). For example, the study of Nassjo region of Sweden carried out by Bergqvist, (2009), identifying how successful is this region in attracting business through its efforts in developing strategic logistic capabilities and using logistics arguments in its place marketing.

5.7.4 Explanatory study – Explanatory studies establish inter-relationships between different variables of the research subject. This approach requires the examination of a situation or a problem in order to understand these relationships (Saunders, *et.al.* 2007).

5.7.5 Action research – this research approach is concerned with the management of change and involves close alliance between practitioners and researchers (Creswell, 2003). Here, the approach to action research design involves a planned intervention by a researcher (often a practitioner) in an appropriate natural social setting, such as organisation (Gill and Johnson, 2002). These interventions are then closely monitored and critically evaluated with the aim of identifying whether or not that action has generated the expected effects and/or outcomes. Therefore, the researcher acts upon their own beliefs or theories to facilitate the change in organisation, within action research. The flexible characteristic of adapting a new direction, upon requirement, of an exploratory study makes it the most suitable fundamental research design to be considered for this thesis.

Moreover, as place branding is relatively a new area of research (Anholt, 2006) within place marketing and the destination branding pool, quite often, there exists uncertainty about understanding the nature of specific research problems and an exploratory study effectively clarifies such uncertainties both in terms of unexpected data and related concepts that were not initially considered (Robson, 2002). However, a descriptive study approach would also be used as an extension to this exploratory study in order to understand new facets of place branding, that were unknown initially, for which relevant data needs to be collected (Saunders, *et.al.* 2007). Finally, an explanatory approach (Saunders, *et.al.* 2007) will be translated into action to examine the relationships between the different variables of place branding with an aim to establish their role in sustainable development of a place.

5.8 Research design

Research design is the framework that guides the execution of a research method in terms of collecting the data and subsequently analysing it (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Moreover,

research design provides the details of how a particular research will go about answering research question(s). Furthermore, it contains clear objectives, derived from the research question(s), specifying the sources to be used to collect data, considering the limitations that the project might face in terms of time, access, location and costs alongside discussing the ethical parameters (Saunders, *et.al.* 2007). Hence, choice of research design reflects decisions about priorities given to the dimensions of the research process.

5.9 Research method

It is simply a technique that is employed for collecting data. This can involve the use of a particular data collecting and recording tool such as a self-completion questionnaire, a pre-structured interview or a participant observation whereby the researcher listens, watches and makes relevant notes (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Therefore, a research method is more about the finer detail of data collection and its analysis (Saunders, *et.al.* 2007). A variety of research methods both in terms of quantitative and qualitative research strategies can be and are associated with different kinds of research design that is adopted and followed throughout a specific research project.

Summary of Research Strategy for this study Table (5.1) summarises the differences between quantitative and qualitative research in terms of theory and research, epistemological and ontological considerations. This research strategy followed in this project is Qualitative: it emphasizes words of actual accounts with the research participants rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data: it follows an inductive approach, emphasizing the development of theories; it rejects the natural science model and positivism, and implies an emphasis on the ways in which individuals interpret their social world by active engagement in the relative activities; and it adopts a constructionist view of social reality as a constantly shifting characteristic of an individual's creation.

5.10 Quantitative Methods

Quantitative research methods are those which are carried out using a structured research approach with a sample of the population to develop quantifiable insights into behaviour, motivations, and attitudes towards a specific context (Saunders, *et.al.* 2003). Generally, the quantitative research methods involve various survey methods (Gill and Johnson, 2002) with appropriately designed questionnaires (Oppenheim, 1992). These include:

Survey methods

Surveying involves the structured questioning of participants and recording of responses, which can be undertaken verbally, in writing or via computer-based technology (Wilson, 2003). There are two types of commonly used surveying methods: *Interviewer-administered* and *self-administered* (or self-completion) survey. The *interviewer-administered* questionnaires (Whitlark and Gearts, 1998), are generally undertaken over the telephone or through face-to-face contact, whilst, *self-administered* surveys are usually delivered or collected physically or electronically (Cobanoglu *et.al.* 2001).

The questionnaire is one of the most important research instruments designed to generate the data for accomplishing a research survey (Oppenheim, 1992). . The standardisation of wording and sequence of questions within a questionnaire asked to each respondents ensures valid comparisons been made between different respondents' answers, also providing data in a similar format that can be easily analysed. Selecting different types of questioning and scaling approach is also of much importance: questioning styles includes '*closed questions*' (Oppenheim, 1992), '*open-ended questions*' (Carson *et.al.* 2001) and '*scaling*' types including '*constant-sum scales*', '*Likert scales*' (Likert, 1932 and Albaum, 1997), '*staples and semantic differential scales*' (Sudman and Bradburn, 1982).

One technique that could have been applied in this research is the Open-ended question (also known as unstructured questions). These are questions in which respondents can respond in their own words giving them a freedom of explaining the aspect in question (Carson, *et.al.* 2001). There are no pre-set choices of answers and the respondent can decide whether to provide a brief one-word response or something very detailed and descriptive. Open-ended questioning has been used previously to study destination branding e.g. Hankinson (2005) to elicit perceptions of quality of each of the 15 destinations used in the study.

However, the major drawback of these questions is their analysis and interpretation which is time-consuming and generally has to be undertaken manually even if the data has been collected using computer-aided interviewing techniques (Gill and Johnson, 2002). Moreover, open-ended questions are particularly difficult in self-administered questionnaire where the respondents do not have an interviewer to probe, therefore, restricting the elaboration on the research topic.

Similarly, a Likert-scale questionnaire might have been considered in this research. A Likert scale questionnaire is based on a format originally developed by Renis Likert in 1932 (O'Leary and Deegan, 2003). This scale involves respondents being asked to state their level of agreement with a series of statements about a product, or an organisation or a research-specific entity. The respondent indicates their agreement by identifying a relative scale-value for each statement and or question included in the questionnaire, which expresses either favourable or unfavourable attributes towards the concept of a particular research question. For example, the responses can be made by selecting one of the following responses: *strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree or strongly disagree*. Likert-scales have been used previously in destination branding research e.g Hosany, *et.al.* (2006) where a 5-point (*with scores (1) not descriptive at all and (5) extremely descriptive*) and a 7-point Likert type (*with scores (-3) extremely poor and (+3) extremely good*) scale was used to measure respondents attributes of a destination brand image and its brand personality. Results derived from the analysis of the collected data via correlation analysis revealed that emotional elements (Kotler and Keller, 2005) of destination image capture the majority of variation (*causal effect*) on destination personality.

However, in addition to the summing scores, it is important to consider the components of the overall attributes as the respondents with similar scores may have rated individual attributes differently (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). For example, some respondents may be positive about the availability of a range of holiday packages and discounted deals for a tourist destination, whereas, others may be more positive about its food, cultural diversity, weather conditions or hospitality. Responses like these are crucial in understanding why a particular '*holiday destination*' is so attractive or unattractive and further, it identifies some key attributes that are significant for a particular market segment in choosing a holiday destination. The Likert scale is the most commonly used quantitative survey technique in commercial, business and marketing research (Albaum, 1997).

However, survey methods may not be appropriate for this research project due to the fact that this research initially involves the identification of key constructs of place branding and then attempts to establish the significance of branding a place. In this case, it is essential to have a detailed discussion with participants in order to collect all round opinions.

Given the concerns about taking a quantitative approach to place branding, it was decided that in-depth interviews was a better way of eliciting such open ended views.

5.11 Qualitative Research Methodologies

This study adopts a qualitative research position. According to Gill and Johnson, (2002) a 'Qualitative' research approach is usually applied to discourse and emphasises the words rather than numeric quantification and analysis of data. This engenders a '*constructionist*' (Flick, 2009) and '*interpretive*' (Bryman and Bell, 2007) approach through which ideas and themes emerge. In this context, Gubrium and Holstein, (1997) suggest that this type of qualitative research seeks to understand social reality. It exhibits a concern with subjectivity, has a naturalistic orientation (Miller and Fox, 2004) and emphasises '*method talk*' in order to interpret new ideas during research.

The main characteristic of qualitative research is that it provides a flexible approach for the interpretation and in-depth understanding of a research situation (Das, 1983). It is most commonly undertaken using an unstructured research approach with a small number of carefully selected individuals, to produce non-quantifiable insights into behaviour, motivations and attitudes (Gordon, 2000). There is a wide range of techniques, such as observation studies (Patton, 1990), content analysis, small surveys and conversational analysis (Stake, *et.al.* 1994), that are available for use in qualitative research for exploring a variety of marketing and branding areas. In addition, more comprehensive and holistic qualitative methodologies such as in-depth interviewing (Marks, 2000), focus groups (Krueger, 1988), case-study research (Perry, 1998), ethnographic studies (Sanday, 1979) and grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) are most commonly used for marketing and business research studies and could have been considered in this research. They include:

5.11.1 Focus groups

Focus groups (also known as group discussions) are depth interviews undertaken with a group of respondents (Krueger, 1988). In addition to the increased number of respondents, they differ from individual interviews in that they involve interaction between the participants. The views or contribution of one person may become the stimulus for another person's contribution or may initiate discussion, debate and even arguments.

They generally take the form of a moderator holding an in-depth discussion with 8-12 participants on one particular topic. However, such group discussions, by definition, do not allow for an in-depth exploration of individual views nor of their individual contribution to a project. For this reason, Focus groups were not used in this research.

5.11.2 Projective techniques

Projective techniques enable a researcher to explore people's ideas, opinions, feelings and experiences and further assists participants to discuss undisclosed issues or "motives of which the respondent may not be explicitly conscious himself" (Haire, 1950) without them feeling threatened by direct questioning. Projective techniques provide verbal or visual stimuli that, through their indirection and concealed intent, encourage respondents to reveal their unconscious feelings and attitudes without being aware that they are doing so (Dichter, 1960).

There are a variety of projective techniques used in marketing research such as Projective Questioning (Kinnear and Taylor, 1991), Word Association Tests (Carson *et al.*, 2001; Vandewalle, 2006), Brand Personalities (Jevons, 2005), Brand Mapping (Kotler and Fox, 1995; Kotler and Andreasen, 1996; Hankinson, 2004; Palmer, 2004, Vandewalle and Phadke, 2006) photo sorts, sentence completion, cartoon completion and role-playing. However, not only are the results often difficult to interpret (Gordon, 2000), but they rely on linking pre-determined ideas and concepts: they do not facilitate exploratory research where the concepts are unknown or unclear and so will not aid in capturing the breadth of the place branding construct.

This is supported by the view of Supphellen (2000) who notes that the analysis of the identity and attributes involved in brand building practices are much more complex for places than for products, and requires the implementation of a more detailed research methodology. This has been followed in this research and will be discussed in next sub-sections.

5.11.3 Case studies

The case study or case-based research methodology usually tends to address research problems within the '*interpretivist*' approach rather than the '*positivist*' approach (Perry *et al.*, 1999).

The case study or case-based research can be explanatory or theory-building research, which incorporates and explains notions from outside the situation and the current context of the

cases (Robson, 1993). Eventually, this type of case study research is '*extrinsic*' rather than '*intrinsic*' wherein: 'there will be a research question, a puzzle or a hurdle, a need for general understanding and a feel, as a researcher, of getting an insight into the question by studying a particular case' (Yin, 1993).

Case study research therefore allows the detailed exploration of a programme, an activity, an event, a process or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2003). These cases are generally time-restricted and focus on a specific activity or event, and researchers collect detailed information using different data collection methods over a suitable period of time (Stake, 1995). Furthermore, Thorpe and Holt, (2008) suggested that a case study research is particularly effective in approaching mechanisms and/or trends that are unclear; vague; fuzzy, even disordered; vibrant processes rather than inactive and deterministic, and includes a large number of variables and relationships which are thus complex and difficult to understand and forecast. The most important characteristic of a case study research is that it encourages the researcher to explore the more unique features of the case, therefore, following an idiographic approach (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Yin, (2003) also comments on the importance of context, suggesting that, within a case study design, the boundaries between the phenomenon and/or mechanism being studied and the context within it is being studied are not clearly manifested. In addition, it also differentiates from the survey or cross-sectional design research where, the ability of a researcher to understand and explore the context is limited by the number of variables for which data can be collected (Robson, 2002). Saunders, *et.al.* (2007) also argue that a case study strategy can play a vital role in exploring existing theories and provide a source for developing new research questions.

However, there are concerns regarding the evaluation of case study research particularly in respect of its external validity and the extent of its generalisability, (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The fact is, they cannot be generalised, in reality, but the elements of that case may be applicable in other similar situations.

Yin, (2003) notes the following distinctions in case studies:

- a. Critical case – a case selected on the assumption that it will enhance the understanding of the situation, better, where pre-specified hypotheses may or not be held.

- b. Revelatory case – a case that provides an opportunity to a researcher to examine and assess a phenomenon or processes previously unapproachable to scientific research. Much of the qualitative research embracing an inductive approach to theory, generally treat single case studies as ‘revelatory’.
- c. Representative case – a case that widely illustrates an everyday situation or form of organisation.
- d. Longitudinal case – a case relating the variance in circumstances over time.

Therefore, generalisability (Saunders, *et.al.* 2007) is not the main purpose of case study design, Having said that, findings of a case study design can be used to compare similar cases, at least, to some degree. For example, the findings from study into corporate communications and stakeholder perceptions in the city of Bradford, UK, carried out by Trueman, *et.al.* (2004) can be generalised to some extent, when applied to certain cities that possesses fairly similar corporate framework and stakeholder groups, to undertake re-branding activities and develop a potential to enhance its brand values.

In conclusion, Teale, (1999) suggests that case study or case-based research is effective for exploring practical business situations/cases, and Miles and Huberman, (1994) emphasise that case study research is particularly useful to explore certain types of problem (for example, Trueman, *et.al.*, 2008 used the district of Manningham, part of Bradford, UK, as a case study to explore how creative branding solutions and regeneration can counter negative perceptions within the city. Meanwhile, Berkowitz, *et.al.*, 2007 use the Olympics 2008 as a case study to explore the effect of this mega- event on China’s global brand equity.

5.11.4 Ethnography

Ethnography is an important form of qualitative research methodology previously developed by anthropologists and sociologists to narrate a society, group or culture (Hammersely and Atkinson, 1983). The main aim of this research method is to answer the research questions about understanding and describing a group of interacting people.

However, with regards to this research project, it may not be appropriate to use an Ethnographic study, due to the fact that, there has been a lack of ownership and leadership within place branding (Hankinson, 2005), leaving no one authority or body to work with.

Therefore the researcher has to look for different stakeholders such as local authorities like City council, Chambers of Commerce, private sector organisations such as the inward investment and infrastructure development firms, NWDA, local businesses and Corporates to collect varied data of perceptions towards the 'significance of place branding'.

5.11.5 Grounded theory

Glaser and Strauss, (1967) developed a method of analysing data that develops its own theories while the data is being collected, rather than testing hypotheses about theories that had been determined before the data collection began. They termed this '*Grounded Theory*'. Grounded theory can be used in marketing research as real world marketing. For example, it has been successfully used to analyse the consumers' perceptions about promotions and advertisements, (Phillips, 1997). However, the controversies among grounded theorists, their jargon and the complexity and apparent subjectivity of their methods has lead to the ignorance of grounded theory in marketing research in the recent past (Goulding, 1998).

5.11.6 Individual in-depth interviews

Individual depth interviews are interviews that are conducted face-to-face, in which the subject matter of the interview is explored in detail using an unstructured and flexible approach (Neuman, 1994). As with all qualitative research, depth interviews are used to develop a deeper understanding of consumer attitudes and the reasons behind specific behaviours (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This understanding is achieved through responding to an individual's comments with extensive probing. The flexibility of this probing sets this interview approach apart from other questionnaire-type interviews. Although there is an agenda of topics to be covered, the interviewers will use their knowledge of the research objectives, the information gained from other interviews and the comments of the respondent to select which parts of the dialogue with the respondent to explore further, which to ignore, and which to return to later in the interview (Marks, 2000). Not only is the depth interview flexible, it is also evolutionary in nature. The interview content and the topics raised may change over a series of interviews as the level of understanding increases.

In-depth interviews tend to be longer than traditional questionnaire-based interviews, with many lasting within the region of 60-90 minutes. Almost all depth interviews are recorded. This enables the conversation to flow, eye contact to be maintained and interaction to occur. In addition, Neuman, (1994) suggests that on some occasions video recording may be

undertaken, particularly where the style of the individual respondent and their non-verbal reaction to the subject of research is relevant.

For example, Hornskov's (2007) study on the management of authenticity in Oresund – a geographical and economic region comprising Southern Sweden and Eastern Denmark which specifically looks at the role of culture in the place branding. The empirical data collected from documentary analysis and 25 qualitative interviews of the Oresund network representatives (a group of organisations responsible for branding activities for the Oresund region), suggested that place branding requires a model of culture sufficiently dynamic to host the disagreement and inconsistency in terms of authenticity. However, notably, it further stresses an argument that place branding is beyond just the appeal to cultural authenticity and the attempt to force branding on the local entities.

5.12 Research Credibility

Before embarking on a discussion of advance research designs, it is essential to understand the issue of the '*credibility*' of research findings and therefore a thorough knowledge of three of the most prominent criteria for evaluation of research is in terms of *reliability*, *replicability* and *validity*, is important (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Furthermore, Raimond (1993) puts it very clearly that a researcher would only know that the findings and conclusions of a particular research stands up to the closest scrutiny by its subjective testing. For example, how does a governmental authority know that the promotional and branding campaign, re-identifying the place, has resulted in enhanced tourism and regeneration? The answer, of course, is that, in actual sense of the question, you cannot know, unless you establish certain relative facts and figures, which are then compared against benchmarked values. However, in order to reduce the possibility of getting it completely wrong, requires an effective research design (Rogers, 1961) and a clear understanding of the concepts of reliability and validity, which are explained below:

5.12.1 Reliability - It is usually concerned with the question of whether the results of a research study are repeatable (Bryman and Bell, 2007). In addition, it further assesses the consistency of the measures that are employed for the concepts in question. Moreover, it is particularly used within quantitative research, so as to establish factual measurements of stability (Robson, 2002). Reliability can be assessed by asking the following main questions as suggested by Easterby-Smith *et.al.* (2002:53):

- Would the same results be obtained at other instances, if the similar measures undertaken?
- Can there be a similarity in the observations made by other observers?
- Is there transparency in how meaning was made from the raw data?

Further, Robson (2002) stresses that the reliability of the research findings faces four major problems that may hinder the quality of the data collected or the accuracy of the data interpretation: these include *Respondent or participant error* (which involves the inaccuracy of data being collected due to different levels of participant involvement or engagement at different times or under different circumstances), *Respondent or participant bias* (which involves the respondents providing data with some kind of reluctance or under pressure), *Observer error* which reflects inconsistency in terms of collection of data) and *Observer bias* (which reflects inconsistency in terms of collection and interpretation of data). Hence, appropriate attention needs to be paid to the selection and consistent quality of recordings as to the adequacy of the data collected (Silverman, 2004).

5.12.2 Validity – It is the most important aspect of any research as it deals with the integrity of the conclusions developed from results and findings of a research study (Silverman, 2000): it is concerned with the rigor of the research and thus assesses the thoroughness of the research findings (Saunders, *et.al.* 2007); it confirms whether the findings are valid and whether the methodologies employed and the results obtained actually relate to the research questions posed. It is important to be familiar with the main types of validity that are commonly used in research problems and are distinguished as below:

Internal validity – This is concerned with the question of whether the experimental variable A did actually have an effect on variable B (Mitchell, 1985). In addition, this type of validity is associated mainly to the issue of causal relationship.

External validity – This type of validity sometimes referred to as ‘generalisability’ (Saunders, *et.al.* 2007), reflects the extent to which the conclusions drawn from a particular research study can be generalised to or beyond specific research setting, persons or times (Cook and Campbell, 1976). This may be of slight concern if, for example, a case study research is conducted on one specific organisation, or a small number of organisations possessing certain business characteristics as it may not represent the overall commonality of other organisations.

Construct/Measurement validity – This type of validity deals with the question of whether or not a measure that is developed of a concept really does reflect the concept that it is supposed to be measuring (Bryman and Bell, 2007). A lack of reflection in ‘Construct validity’ in the research findings appears pragmatically as contamination (variance in the measure that is not present in the construct) and/or deficiency (variance in the construct not captured by the measure) (Schwab, 1980).

However, much of the discussion concerning to reliability and validity relates mainly to quantitative research rather than qualitative research, since reliability (Silverman, 2004), itself, and Construct validity (Bryman and Bell, 2007) are essentially concerned with the adequacy of measures, and therefore, clearly relate to quantitative research. On the other hand, internal validity is associated with the causal relationships as specified by the accuracy of the findings (Mitchell, 1985) and therefore is once again an issue that is most commonly related to quantitative research. Finally, issues relating to sampling procedures that maximise the opportunity of generating a representative sample (Cook and Campbell, 1976) are also more likely to be associated with quantitative research (although it may also be relevant to qualitative research, in some circumstances). As a result, understanding a clear need to derive alternate terminologies and variant methods of assessing qualitative research, Onwuegbuzie and Leech, (2007) suggested that every qualitative inquiry, findings, interpretations, and conclusions should be assessed for truth, value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality via its dependability, credibility, confirmability, transferability and generalisability, by developing a ‘*Qualitative Legitimation Model*’. Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose ‘trustworthiness’ is the central criterion of how rigorous and valid a qualitative research project is. Each aspect of ‘trustworthiness’ has a equivalence with the above listed quantitative research criteria such as:

Credibility – this corresponds to internal validity – i.e. how realistic are the research findings?

Transferability – this corresponds to external validity – i.e. can the findings be generalised and applied to other contexts?

Dependability – this corresponds to reliability – i.e. are the findings likely to be applied to other research settings, across times and/or persons.

Confirmability – this corresponds to objectivity – i.e. has the researcher allowed his or her values to impinge on the research?

Finally, both these issues of reliability and validity are critically important for any research, because they reflect the *objectivity* and *credibility* of a research study, respectively (Silverman, 2004).

5.13 Selection of the method for this research

This research takes a more blended approach in terms of employing a research strategy with a deductive strategy (Bryman and Bell, 2007) introduced at the initial stages to help differentiate *place branding* from the existing pool of place marketing and destination branding literature, and set up a research direction to understand the role of former in the growth and development of a place. Thus, eventually moving towards an inductive position, (Schwartzman, 1993) to establish the relationship between the importance of place branding, and sustainable growth, so as to contribute to the existing knowledge of subject area. Furthermore, given the discussions in the previous sub-sections about the relationships between various ontological positions alongside their constituent epistemological philosophical research orientations, the researcher stresses that, as the subject of place branding and its role and importance in sustainable development, in particular, requires an in depth understanding of the behaviour of various social actors (i.e. the key stakeholders and governing authorities) involved in creating, developing and using the brand, this research project would consider a philosophical orientation that follows the '*Interpretivist*' (Thorpe and Holt, 2008) approach, coupled by an epistemological position of '*constructivism*' (Flick, 2009) through the implementation of ideographic methodology (Hermans, 1988).

In addition, because the literature on place branding is not yet rich enough, as mentioned in the literature review chapter to provide a sound conceptual foundation for investigating place brand, an exploratory qualitative research study (Robson, 2002) is carried out to investigate first, facets of place branding and their importance and second, to establish the significance of place branding in sustainable development by identifying a range of causal relationships of those facets that a place may possess. Bearing this in mind, a case study research design (Creswell, 2003) is employed to provide a better understanding of the concept of place branding and its importance. As Hankinson (2004) suggests, it is a complex construct which

is related to a variety of different facets within a place. Therefore, this research specifically discusses the case of the ‘City of Liverpool’ and its Liverpool’08 – ‘The European Capital of Culture 2008’ place brand campaign in terms of the methodological implementation and data collection.

First, the main reason for selecting the ‘City of Liverpool’ as a place of study was the ongoing regeneration developments, collective re-branding exercises and the programme of re-positioning activities undertaken by leading local and regional authorities, both within the public and private sectors, across the city and region. Second, the announcement of successfully winning the bid to hold the title of ‘European Capital of Culture’ in 2008, actually acted as the ‘catalyst’ as it brought about the purposeful and success-oriented place branding campaign of ‘Liverpool’08’ with an aim to transform and develop the image of the ‘City of Liverpool’ as a ‘world class’ city to visit, work and live.

As a result, it was considered the most appropriate ‘place’ to carry out this study. The ‘City of Liverpool’ offers wider prospects of place branding as it provides a unique opportunity to explore the various facets that hold its identity and image both historically and currently. Furthermore, it also presents a strong proposal that highlights the need for sustainable development in developing places through sensible brand efforts. In this context, the ‘City of Liverpool’ also possesses one of the most diverse blends of social actors responsible for enhancing its brand image, which in turn makes it even more exciting to investigate, the transition state from a ‘*place branding*’ and ‘*sustainable development*’ perspective. The following Table (5.2) gives a brief summary of the range of research methods and approaches chosen for this project with related references:

Table 5.2 - Summary of the methodology employed

Category	Method employed	Suggesting authors and research scholars
Research strategy – theory	Deductive (<i>brief-initially</i>)	Bryman and Bell, (2007)
	Inductive (<i>majority</i>)	Schwartzman, (1993)
Philosophical orientation – research	Interpretivist (<i>ontological</i>)	Thorpe and Holt, (2008)
	Constructionist (<i>epistemological</i>)	Flick, (2009)
Research design	Exploratory (<i>fundamental</i>)	Robson, (2002)

	Case-study (<i>advanced</i>)	Creswell, (2003)
Research approach	Qualitative	Denzin and Lincoln, (2008); Glaser and Strauss, (1967)
Research method	Individual in-depth interviews (<i>semi-structured</i>)	Miles and Huberman, (1994)
Place-specific analysis	'City of Liverpool' and Liverpool'08 place branding campaign	European Capital of Culture - 2008

5.14 Sample selection

Hussey and Hussey, (1997) mentioned that sampling enables a higher accuracy than a census. The smaller the number of cases for which you need to collect data means that more time can be spent designing and piloting the means of collecting this data and proportionally more time can be devoted to checking and testing the data for accuracy of analysis. Furthermore, qualitative research by and large involves non-probability samples for selecting the population (actual research participants) for study (Mays and Pope, 1995). In this study, non-probability samples were selected, i.e. key stakeholders and influencers of the Liverpool Place Brand. This sample is not meant to be statistically representative; however, but were chosen to give a definitive opinion and judgement about the brand.

Bearing this in mind, the decision was made to follow a place-specific approach to carry out this research by studying the branding campaign undertaken by respective places which has been going through generation and developmental phase recently. For example, the main reasons behind choosing 'City of Liverpool' for this research are listed below:

- Liverpool is undergoing a remarkable renaissance through impressive regeneration drive, with over £4-5 billion worth of major developments over next 5-10 years (TMP, 2007).
- Liverpool's European Capital of Culture 2008 status has helped attract the biggest share of foreign direct investment in any UK region outside London and the south east (Hodgson, Liverpool Echo, 2007).
- Figures from the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform show the North West, in the year to April, attracted 138 major projects, created 3,492 direct jobs, 7,659 associated jobs and safeguarded a further 4,028 existing jobs.

- Ample opportunities to investigate the influence of place branding campaigns such as ‘Liverpool’08’, The Big Dig, Liverpool One – Shopping paradise, Water front development, World Heritage site and Gateway to the North West.
- Employment in Liverpool has grown by almost 15% since 2000 (Liverpool Vision, 2008). Many of these new jobs have been in the most dynamic parts of the economy – finance and banking, digital technology and professional services.
- The number of working age people in employment increased by 4.4% between 2000 and 2006, the second biggest improvement of the UK’s major cities.
- The Liverpool economy generates more than £7bn Gross Value Added (GVA) - some 41.1% of total Merseyside GVA – a share that has increased from 39.7% in 1995 – and 25% of City Region GVA (Liverpool Vision, 2008).
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport is the fastest growing regional airport in the UK and was voted ‘UK Airport of the Year 2007’.
- Liverpool’s Business District has seen the development of 1.3m sq ft of Grade A new and refurbished space in the last 5 years.
- Grosvenor’s £1 billion retail-led Liverpool One development is one of the largest of its kind in Europe and Peel Holdings Plc. is planning a £5.5 billion waterfront development to compare with cities such as Dubai, Vancouver, New York and Shanghai (Liverpool Vision, 2008).
- Liverpool’s Knowledge Quarter has world leading businesses in health and life sciences and generates £1 billion a year to the city’s economy (TMP, 2009).
- The Liverpool City Region, comprising of Liverpool, Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral, is one of the most exciting and thriving economic regions in the UK (NWDA, 2008). It has the fastest growing economy in the country and is home to blue chip companies such as Jaguar/Land Rover, Littlewoods, IBM, Novartis, Grosvenor and Peel (TMP, 2009).
- Increasing global interest.
- World Heritage site and Waterfront developments.

- Well-known historical, cultural and heritage of the city.
- Visitor attraction – as a result of both the rebranding and repositioning drive promoting Liverpool as a happening place to visit, work and live.

Therefore, the ‘City of Liverpool’ as an over-arching construct of a place within it, provides an exciting opportunity to investigate the significance of place branding and its influences. At the same time there has been very little research into issues of place and sustainability and so this allows the development of a conceptual model that can act as a framework that will not only inform future place branding activities but also provide insights to continuous development in the future.

The Literature Review indicates that place branding has multiple stakeholder involvement and as yet, there are neither benchmarks from previous research, that identifies the brand leaders or organisations involved, nor their relative importance in the branding process. In addition, the Literature Review also indicates that there is no single unified concept of the place brand or of its component parts. The starting point of this study then, is to interview in-depth a range of assumed key brand creators and policy makers. This includes governing authorities represented by civic leaders, public and private sector organisations, internal and external stakeholders, and those delivering and working behind the development of the brand image of Liverpool. It is important that these individuals represent the most authoritative voices and can therefore give definitive opinion about Liverpool as a place brand. So, in this context, only the top-level representatives (such as Chief Executives, Directors and Senior Managers) were invited to take part in the study. Their selection was to some extent also influenced by limitations in terms of access and time constraints, although the sampling correlation ensured that the participants interviewed had as much common purpose (either creating or delivering the Liverpool place brand), as possible and therefore gives a sound foundation for an accurate summary. Interviews were to continue with the key leaders until such time that no further new information was forthcoming and that data congruence was achieved.

The following Table (5.3) gives a detailed description of each research participant, their respective representative organisation type and their role.

Table: 5.3- Sample selection

Role of the research participant selected for this research	Relative key dimensions from Table (4.1)	Organisation type/Representative body	Source reference used for analysis
Marketing Director, Liverpool Vision	Infrastructure; Logistics; Capacity; Regeneration	Business Development Organisation, Inward Investments	1
Senior Brand Manager, The Culture Company	Culture and Heritage:	The Culture Company, established to co-ordinate events for ECoC'08	2
Board of Directors, The Culture Company	Culture and Heritage: Capability; Sustainable growth;	Brand Campaign Committee	3
Media Director	Attributes & Associations; Change	International Media Company	4
City Council Leader – Public Welfare Services	; Residents: Services: Change; Regeneration	The City Council	5
Chief Executive Officer	Infrastructure; Logistics; Stakeholders	Grosvenor: Major Development and regeneration company	6
Chief Executive	Business: Investments and Commerce: Sustainable development	Chambers of Commerce	7
Director of Marketing and Customer Relationship, North West Development Agency	Logistics; Infrastructure, Inward Investment: Sustainable Development	Regional Partnership Organisation – ECoC'08	8
The Lord Mayor	The People: Business: Commerce, Inward Investment: Change; Sustainable growth; World-Class status	The City of Liverpool	9
Director and Head of the ECoC'08 branding campaign	Major events & headlines; Capability	European Capital of Culture 2008 – Brand Campaign Company	10
Director – Inward Investments, The Mersey Partnership	Capacity; Sustainable growth; Capability	Inward Investment and Economic Development	11
Marketing Executive – Major Inward Investment company	Infrastructure; World-Class status; Stakeholders	International Property Development and Investment Company	12
Board of Directors– North West Development Agency	Change; Regeneration; local and regional Stakeholders	Regional Development Agency	13
Director – Community Development and Social Welfare, Liverpool City Council	Residents, Amenities and services,	Community and Enterprise	14

Sample frame

Bearing this in mind that the philosophical stance of this research is an inductive – interpretivist approach, there is no intention to elicit perceptions from a range of ‘*User-Cohorts*’ using quantitative means. Instead, the intent is to interview the key stakeholders (*as listed above*) who will elicit the wider views of the multiple-publics. So for instance, views of ‘*visitors*’ are represented by the likes of The Mersey Partnership (into which the Tourist Board has been subsumed); the voice for ‘*businesses*’ resides with ‘Liverpool Vision’ and the Chambers of Commerce, and the views of the communities would be established by the representations from the ‘Community and Social Development’ Enterprises, listed in the above table (5.3).

5.14.1 Research Interviews

In order to explore the nature of the place brand, in-depth personal interviews comprising open-ended and semi structured, carefully selected, questions were conducted at a mutually pre-agreed time and place, whilst allowing for some flexibility in the overall discussion. In this context, Miller and Glassner, (1997) suggested that interviews interpret relative meanings that individuals attribute to their experiences about social world. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews are one of the principle methods of data collection in qualitative research. The use of semi-structured interviews gave an opportunity to identify associative relationships between different concepts, therefore allowing for understanding to be made regarding the reasons for decisions being made in terms of specific attitudes and opinions, towards certain aspects. It certainly provided the researcher an excellent opportunity to probe the interviewees in more depth, with each lasting 35-45 minutes, on average.

Moreover, to increase the comprehension of the data and make the relative data collection systematic for each research participant (Greenfield, 2002), an interview guide was produced with the main purpose being a checklist for carrying out the identical-themed interviews and to serve as a reference point. Although, the interviews were themed, the interviewees were given as much time as possible to answer questions and any deviant responses from the main theme were explored carefully, in order to avoid any important and salient concepts that the actual research question may have omitted.

The in-depth interviews followed a similar format, where broad questions were asked around the following aspects and related themes:

- The ECoC '08 Branding Campaign: here the types of questions included:

What do you think the ECoC '08 brand campaign has brought to Liverpool?

- Liverpool as a place brand: here the types of questions included:

“Why do you think it is important to brand a place?”

“How do you think Liverpool is perceived as a place both internally and externally?”

“Is Liverpool capable of taking its place in the list of World Class Cities?”

- Liverpool Brand Management: here the types of questions included

“Who are the main stakeholders for ‘Liverpool’ place brand?”

“What are the major difficulties and obstacles that Liverpool faces in relation to its development?”

- The relationship between the Liverpool Place Brand and sustainable development: here the types of questions included:

“How do you think Liverpool can achieve sustainability in terms of future growth strategies and maintaining continuous development?”

“What do you think is important to the sustainable development of Liverpool?”

5.15 Overcoming the issues of reliability and validity

The previous discussion (see Section 5.8) indicates the need for studies to demonstrate both reliability and validity. In qualitative research, ‘Validity’ is expressed in terms of ‘credibility’ (internal validity) and ‘transferability’ (external validity), whilst ‘Reliability’ and ‘Objectivity’ are given by ‘dependability’ and ‘confirmability’ respectively:

- Credibility** (which corresponds to ‘internal validity’ of the research). In order to achieve this and produce the most credible results, cross-checking (using triangulation between questions and data collected at various stages of the field study) was applied. Furthermore regular meetings were carried out with fellow researchers and academic colleagues who were not involved in this research in order to overcome any missed concepts or disclose the researcher’s own blind spots, if any, while coding,

interpreting findings and drawing out discussions of the results. Moreover, to maximise the credibility of the coding, applied to the data, an independent checker was sent all the codes with example 'data text references' from the interview scripts for cross-validation. The checker confirmed that the coding methodology was valid and agreed the coding structure. There were some minor differences in the nomenclature used to describe the parent and child nodes (see Coding, Section 6.1) which were mutually agreed.

- b. **Transferability** (this corresponds to 'external validity', and relates to the generalisation of the findings and their applicability in other contexts). Although, this was a place-specific research, careful efforts were made to include generative questions and effective probes that elicited some general responses from the participants during interviews. This was quite clearly exemplified during the initial coding stages and development of thematic categories and relationships within the various concepts, which not only reflected the facets of the 'sample-place' for this research, but highlighted some of the key facets that can be easily generalised and employed in any similar study or research project carried out anywhere in the future.
- c. **Dependability** – this corresponds to 'reliability' – to achieve this- an audit trail (Schwandt and Halpern, 1988) was established listing key aspects, while conducting field study and analysis of data. This ensured that consistent methodologies were applied and the data were treated in exactly the same way. This was also helped by:
- accurate and consistent collection and recording of the raw data throughout the research;
 - appropriate storing of memos and researcher's notes attached to each of the sources;
 - reconstruction/transcription of data and the results of this synthesis according to the structure of the developed concepts and categories (themes, relationships), and the discussion of findings linking to the existing literature;
- d. **Confirmability** – this corresponds to 'objectivity' –in order to achieve maximum consistency of meaning through data interpretation at the coding stages, an '*intra-code checker*' strategy was implemented at the initial and intermediate stages of

analysis by employing an independent researcher to triangulate the resultant codes (basic coding) produced by the researcher and the fellow researcher working independently. The same conclusions were reached in both cases, highlighting the objectivity and reliability of the codes used to categorise collected data.

5.16 Research ethics

Due to the involvement of data collection methods in this research, there are potential issues regarding the confidentiality of the data gathered from primary research. In order to avoid these concerns of confidentiality, anonymity was provided to all the participants who took part, with the offer for the respondents to partly or completely withdraw from the research study if they choose to, at anytime. Furthermore, a University ethics clearance form was signed by the researcher's primary supervisor to approve the ethical implications of this thesis and a University consent form was signed by each participant before taking part in the interview.

To ensure anonymity participants were given code numbers from 1 to 14. Moreover, responses collected through interviews were recorded via by Digital voice recorder (permission was taken by each interviewee prior to its use) together with spontaneous notes made at the time of each interview. Each interview lasted on an average of approximately 35-45 minutes to an hour, however, 2 interviews (interview with respondent 6 and 13) went on over an hour and a half due to the extensive description of responses resulting from their personal experiences – both professional and informal experiences were mentioned. Throughout each interview, the respondent was probed and asked for further clarification as appropriate. All the interviews were transcribed using software called 'Express Scribe' (a software that allows the operator to adjust the pace and volume of the recording i.e. fast or slow and high or low) once recorded.

5.17 Conclusion

This Chapter introduced both epistemological and ontological research philosophies, their various forms and relative importance in business research, followed by a critical explanation of the various inductive and deductive research designs, strategies and methods. It further described a range of both qualitative and quantitative methods applied to place branding research and their influence to this research. Finally, it identified the rationale for selecting

the place-specific approach and relative sample selection to carry out this research using qualitative in-depth interviews with semi-structured questions.

Chapter: 6 Data Analysis

6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the analytical procedures used to analyse the data collected as a result of implementing the research methodology as previously discussed.

6.1 Analysis

The analysis of data for this research follows Miles and Huberman's (1994) three-part conceptualisation of the data-analysis process: data reduction (fracturing and slicing the data by coding (Bazeley, 2007)), data display (presentation of research findings relative to the research criteria) and conclusion drawing/verification (discussion and evaluation of theory development). This framework, when applied to the research, also encapsulates aspects of grouping similar patterns, shuttling between data concepts and categories, building a logical chain of evidence through meaningful relationships, and making conceptual and/or theoretical coherence (Miles and Huberman, 1994) that will eventually make a contribution to the existing knowledge of place branding.

In relation to this, computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDA) using NVivo has been employed as it reflects a nuance of hard data, by creating a computational representation of the relationships emerging from the data, and provides overall objectivity, which is important to the development of theory (Dohan and Sanchez-Jankowski, 1998).

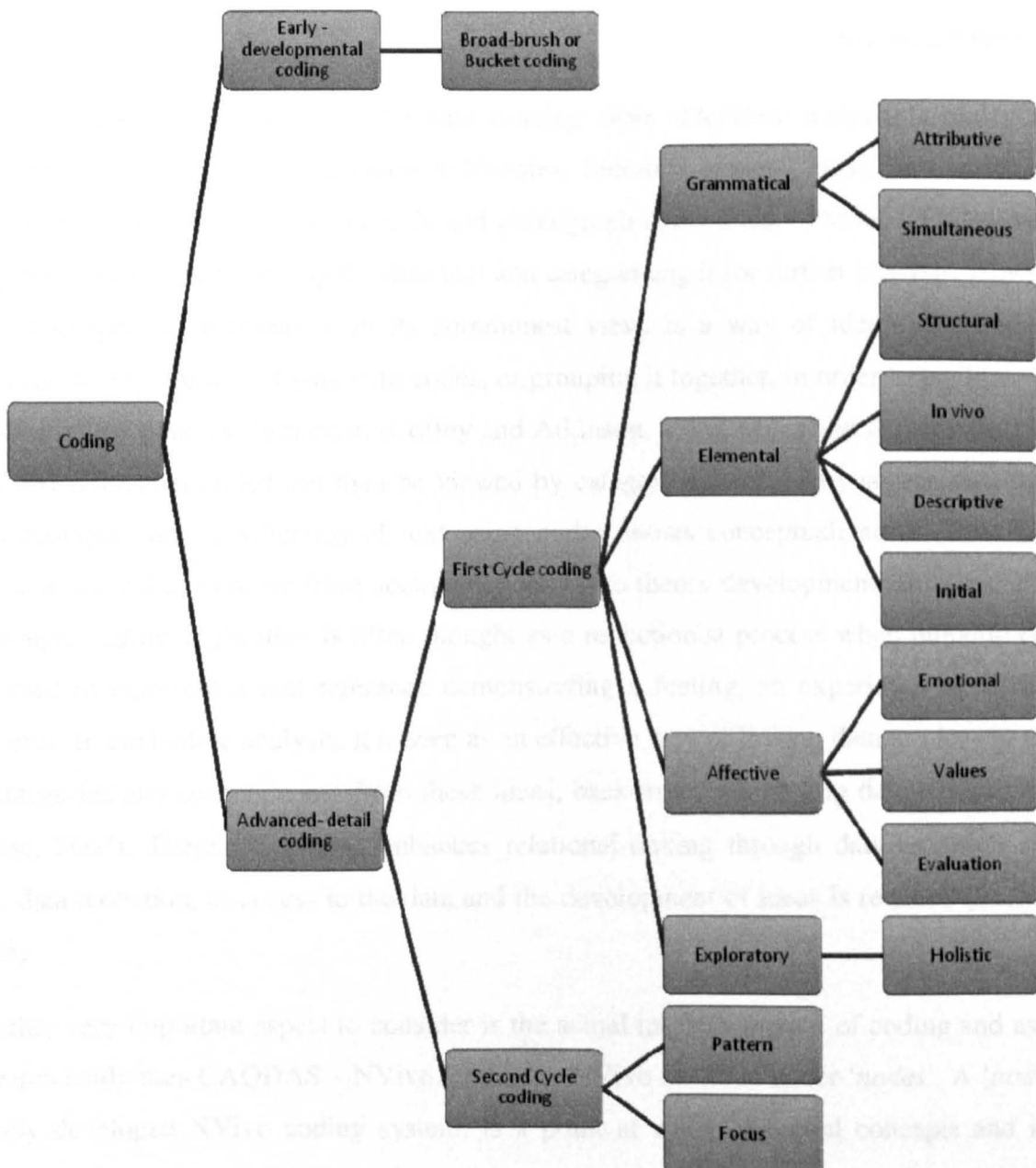
Moreover, transcripts were generated for each research participant interview using 'Express Scribe' software, Digital voice recorder and the researcher's own notes which were uploaded on to NVivo in order to facilitate CAQDA. Each interview transcript documented was given a unique identification number i.e. a source between 1 and 14 (as there were 14 transcripts in total), so as to enable smooth coding and use of other analysis features in NVivo.

In this context, all cases once created in NVivo were thoroughly analysed via extensive content analysis in order to enable a systematic qualitative analysis of the contents of the data within each respondent interview (Krippendorff, 2003; Weber, 1990). The content analysis is facilitated by careful coding of the texts and passages within each case generating the relative concepts corresponding to the participant's responses to the specific interview questions.

These concepts are exposed to more advanced coding methods using the methodology of Saldana, (2009) with an aim to develop thematic categories of data.

Figure 6.1 below displays different types of codes and coding used to code text references of interview transcripts for this study so as to prepare data collected for analysis. Moreover, the following sub-sections discuss all coding approaches implemented throughout the data analysis stages of this research using extensive content analysis (Krippendorff, 2003; Weber, 1990). This is followed by the presentation of the research findings, together with critical discussion and evaluation of the results.

Figure 6.1: Types of coding



6.2 Coding the data

According to Strauss and Corbin, (1998) a code is an abstract representation of an object or phenomenon, which ranges from being completely descriptive and generic (as labels for topics or themes) to more interpretive categories or analytical concepts (Richards, 2005).

In addition, a code is a tool that is most commonly used in a qualitative investigation and is referred as:

“...a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a proportion of language-based or visual data”.

(Saldana, 2009:3)

This data can be in a variety of forms ranging from interview transcripts and survey documents to participant observation field-notes, literature review, email correspondence, website information/survey, to journals and photograph collections, to videos. Codes can be very effective in understanding the data text and categorising it for further analysis. However, coding in qualitative research, in its commonest view, is a way of identifying and then ‘tagging’ text references of data with codes, or grouping it together, in order to facilitate later retrieval at the point of discussion (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The text references coded can then be viewed by category as well as by source, facilitating data management; classification of text using codes assists conceptualization. This further assists a researcher to move from document analysis to theory development (Bazeley, 2007). Although, coding application is often thought as a reductionist process when numeric codes are used to represent a text reference demonstrating a feeling, an experience or attribute, however, in qualitative analysis, it is seen as an effective way of linking data to ideas in terms of categories and concepts, and from these ideas, back to the supporting data (Richards and Morse, 2007). Therefore, coding enhances relational-linking through data retention rather than data reduction, as access to the data and the development of ideas is retained (Richards, 2005).

Another very important aspect to consider is the actual implementation of coding and as this research study uses CAQDAS – NVivo, coding in NVivo is stored under ‘nodes’. A ‘node’ in a fully developed NVivo coding system, is a point at which potential concepts and ideas

initially branch out into a network of sub-concepts and/or dimensions (Bazeley, 2007). A separate node is made for each topic or concept, much like designating a file for each topic, and relative text from source documents and/or 'cases' are stored as 'references' at each node, once coded. Using these text references, NVivo is able to locate and retrieve all the coded passages from the source document records. In addition, '*memos*' and '*annotations*' can be added to the codes which can include any field notes made by the researcher at the time of a data collection; observation; reflective thoughts about the participant (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008), or any further information such as notes that may illuminate or reflect on a specific part of data text (Miles and Huberman, 1994), participant's feelings, nature of involvement, reaction to certain research questions, respectively, that can put more light on the research aspect.

Furthermore, in terms of coding data at 'nodes', the initial codes are stored at '*free nodes*' – which do not demonstrate any relationships or connections but simply serve as 'dumping' points for data text about ideas that may evolve during early analysis stage (Richards, 2005). Later these nodes are likely to be more polished and organised and moved into a categorical structure of '*tree nodes*' which are hierarchical, branching structures in which the main tree node (often known as a '*parent node*') serves as a connecting point for subcategories called 'child nodes' or types of concepts (Bazeley, 2007). Although, nodes in NVivo store coding about topics or concepts, they are also used for organisational purposes as nodes are the most efficient way to bring together different segments of text from data sets, whether they are from within a single source or from different sources.

Moreover, differentiating specific text references into relative codes, adding memos and linking text references to identify structural features, emerging concepts and categories and emotions, as well as content, all assist in interpreting the narration of the context described and accounts given by the research participants (Bazeley, 2007). However, some research approaches such as discourse analysis, may not use coding of data at all, but rely instead on detailed transcription information and analytical memos about the data (Gee, *et.al.* 1999). Some believe coding to be a repulsive task incompatible with modern interpretivist qualitative research methodologies such as 'performance ethnography' and 'narrative enquiry' (Hendry, 2007). Others, for instance, Dey, (1999), consider coding in general to be a non-theoretical, mechanistic and purposeless procedure. However, this researcher follows the view of Saldana, (2009) who suggests the necessity and benefit of the coding method for

selective qualitative studies which allows subsequent and substantive data analysis. Coding can be carried out in different ways from one-time specific coding to step-step cyclic coding in order to be as rigorous as possible.

The data analysis for this research takes the latter method of coding, and uses 'First-cycle' coding to develop emerging categories from the data collected and then a more advanced 'Second-cycle' coding to reconfigure the previously coded text with an aim to develop meaningful concepts for appropriate theory development.

The following sub-sections discuss the different range of coding styles used to differentiate text references from the interview transcripts generated from the data collected for this study with specific examples such as relative text references from the actual data itself, to provide a flavour of coding.

6.2.1 Early – developmental coding

This sub-section discusses the very first phase of coding in order to familiarise oneself with the data and understand the flow and key areas that it reflects. The following coding method also initiates the coding for this study.

Broad-brush or bucket Coding

This type of coding refers to the coding that takes place initially while going through the data transcripts or document texts as a first step to see what it says, and therefore may simply involve collective text passages which collect together into broad topic areas, and which may be seen as relevant to the research criteria (Bazeley, 2007).

The broad-brush coding, although, not a particular type of coding, provides the following advantages prior to the application of specific codes:

- It helps a researcher in identifying the relative text belonging to the key topic areas that the research is attempting to investigate.
- Creates a collection of text passages that need to be considered at a later stage due to their relationship to a particular research approach.
- It also facilitates understanding by identifying patterns in the data collected.

Two interview transcripts were initially coded through this type of coding with the aim of identifying the main patterns of data collection obtained from the responses to the questions posed. Moreover, this also improves confidence when dealing with sorting of qualitative data and grouping of the text passages (qualitative interview references) to reflect the responses to the specific research questions.

For example, the following reference taken from one of the two initially coded interview transcripts (interview source id.no:5) demonstrates the use of 'broad-brush' coding in order to set a piece of text aside that reflects the investigation criteria of the 'ECoC'08 brand campaign and its influence' and coded at a free node – 'European Capital of Culture':

"It brought in self-confidence, self-belief. In fact, immediately when we had the announcement of winning the bid for ECoC –we had, on that day £40m worth of enquiries in terms of inward investments. So, just the act of winning the bid made the people say: "Oh! Hang on, they have won, let's go and have a look" and even though many of those did not translated into hard cash, some did. Nevertheless, the fact was that this began to change the perceptions of Liverpool as it was the hard evidence that people were taking it seriously. It was interesting that the BBC, last year in autumn (2008), did a 'Vox-Pop' in the city where they were asking people whether they had felt confident in the city because what had happened as a result of ECoC... and if they did, if they were optimistic....they had to drop a pebble in the pot, and at the end of the 'Vox-Pop' period (I think it was full day)...the optimistic pot was full. So what we have seen is that it has actually changed how people view themselves and their city completely. It was no longer 'we can't.....' it's changed to 'we can.....we can do this'. I think it is really important".

Once the text passages of the interview transcripts have been coded broadly as described above, it then makes it easier to carry out further detailed analysis via advanced coding methods to highlight the richness of the data, that reflects a range of dimensions in which the participants are considering or the interview transcripts are reporting.

Moreover, these types of 'Broad' or 'Early' coding approaches lead to the identification of the concept of which these collective pieces of texts are indicators, and the context of what is being described and how it is been interpreted by different research participants. All the

codes used at this stage are called 'Free Codes'. This stage was checked by an independent person who confirmed that the Free Codes had been correctly established.

The next sub-section discusses those advanced coding types in detail that have been employed to slice and/or fracture the data, into tiny meaningful texts, collected through interviews for this research project.

6.2.2 Advanced or detail coding

This sub-section carefully assesses the data collected through the analysis of the each passage of the interview transcript of each research participant to identify who, when, what, where and how aspects of what is being reported (relative to each research question) and how each of these component texts is then recorded as a separate code (Dey, 1993). The coding is performed purely on the computer using NVivo and is divided into two main parts in order to analyse the data for this study as listed below:

- 1) First-Cycle and Second-Cycle coding methods.
- 2) Cyclic and Non-linear coding methods which compare data to code: code to code, data to data, code to category and category back to data and so on.

6.2.2.1 First – Cycle coding

According to Saldana, (2009) First Cycle coding methods are the ones that take place during the initial coding of the data. There are seven subcategories of this coding cycle namely, Grammatical, Elemental, Affective, Literary and Language, Exploratory, Procedural and Thematic. However, the one that is used for this study is explained below with an example of a 'text reference' taken from the actual data.

There were 238 free nodes, which evolved from the data and formed the total body of 'Concepts' – i.e. the development of facets that play some role in place branding (*for full details of individual codes and relative text references codedPlease see coding summary report Appendix A*).

The following Table (6.1) gives a brief description of each of the coding techniques used in analysing the data for this research project.

Table: 6.1: First-Cycle coding methods

Coding type	Description with Example
Grammatical coding	<i>enables the organisation and texture of qualitative data collected (Saldana, 2009)</i>
Attribute	Description - Derives a research setting in a simple notation such as participant characteristics or demographics; data format and field-work setting (Lofland, <i>et.al.</i> 2006).
	Example – <i>“I also think that the sporting legacy of Liverpool of two football clubs, has played their part both internationally and nationally” (4)</i>
Simultaneous	Description - Refers to two or more codes applied to same or successive text passages of the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994)
	Example – <i>“The opportunities are created through Liverpool’08 brand campaign as 100s of millions of pounds worth of investments have come into Liverpool” (7)</i> – coded at two reference codes for example, opportunity (in Benefits tree node) and ECoC (tree node).
Elemental Coding	<i>Is a basic approach to coding qualitative texts (Saldana, 2009)</i>
Structural	Description - Is used as foundation work for detailed coding later as it both codes and initially categorises the body of data (Namey, <i>et.al.</i> 2008).
	<p>Example – <i>question reflecting research category: challenges to sustainable growth –</i></p> <p>Interviewee 10: <i>“the sort of worldwide credit crunch will affect Liverpool like everywhere else in the whole world and I have just come back from ‘Cologne’, Germany and I was asking the people of Cologne and the Lord Mayor of Cologne about how the impact of the world-wide recession, if you like, is going to affect Cologne..... the same thing will happen to Liverpool.... of course we will be negatively affected by what’s happening”</i></p> <p>Interviewer: <i>so how will you tackle it?</i></p> <p>Interviewee 10: <i>“With the economic downturn how can we encourage the business to be sustainable? How can we encourage them to set-up? If they are already set-up, support</i></p>

	<i>them, to remain in business and help them to identify where they are going wrong?"</i>
<i>In vivo</i>	Description - This draws codes from the respondents' own description (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Corbin and Strauss, 2008).
	Example – <i>“the exposure that it is given is worth around £200 billion globally of brand exposure which again you would have never achieved without the ‘Capital of Culture’ title for the ‘City of Liverpool’”(12) – coded at ‘brand exposure’</i>
<i>Descriptive</i>	Description - Used to tag the data text with basic labels to provide an inventory of the topics (Saldana, 2009).
	Example – <i>“Moreover, we had tremendous participation all round, media focus is quite (.....) positive” (1/2)– coded at ‘positive media’</i>
<i>Initial</i>	Description - It refers to the researcher's first look at the data in order to categorise it (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).
	Example – <i>“this will certainly bring change in attitudes both from Liverpoolians towards Liverpool but from other people outside towards the way Liverpool is perceived” – coded at ‘new brand perception’</i>
Affective coding	<i>This type of coding technique investigates the subjective qualities of human experience such as emotions and values (Sladana, 2009).</i>
<i>Emotional</i>	Description - It represents the feelings that the participants may have experienced (Prus, 1996).
	Example – <i>“People in Liverpool now possess a sense of civic pride for their city which was missing in last 20-25 years for various reasons” (7) – coded at ‘belief’</i>
<i>Values</i>	Description - Assesses a respondent's attitude and integrated values towards a particular facet (Gable and Wolfe, 1993).
	Example – <i>“the best example is to get a Hilton hotel in Liverpool, as per the recent announcement, was clearly one of those measures of success” (4) – coded at ‘achievement’</i>
<i>Evaluation</i>	Description - Looks at the data analysis from the judgemental perspective in terms of merits and worth (Rossman and Rallis, 2003).
	Example – <i>“so when you begin talking in those terms, we look at</i>

	<i>what ECoC has brought: 15million net visitors to the city for ECoC and you are looking at somewhere around 14,000 jobs” (5) – coded at ‘brand exposure’</i>
Exploratory coding	<i>Enables open-ended examination of the research context (Saldana, 2009).</i>
Holistic	Description - Refers to the application of a single code to a ‘chunk’ of data text in order to capture a sense of overall contents and evolving categories (Dey, 1993).
	Example – <i>“I also think that sporting legacy of Liverpool and the two football stadiums has played their part both internationally and nationally. You can go anywhere in the world – you can walk into in bar in very much any country in the world, sit down and they have got the television on and watching football, people sat down and watch a Liverpool game and you have got people who have never been to Liverpool, they talking about Liverpool and its football and they are experts in Liverpool football clubs’ statistics and you may think: “god!!- what’s going on?” (4) – coded at ‘sporting legacies’</i>

6.2.2.2 Second- cycle coding

These are the most advanced ways of reorganising and reanalysing the data coded through the ‘First Cycle’ coding methods (Saldana, 2009). The main aim of employing ‘Second Cycle’ coding is to develop a rigorous framework of conceptual, thematic and/or theoretical organisation from the collection of ‘First cycle’ codes. Moreover, Second Cycle methods are slightly more challenging because they demand advance analytical skills such as identifying, classifying, prioritising, integrating, synthesising, abstracting, conceptualising, and theory building. It further enhances the categorisation of First-Cycle coded data as an initial analytical strategy towards theory development.

A total of 169 tree nodes resulted after reorganising the ‘concepts’ derived earlier and were grouped relative to each other into a tree structure known as ‘categories’– development of over-arching categories by linking initial concepts together as identified in the First-Cycle coding (*for details of ‘Category’ developmentplease see noding summary report - Appendix B*). These were also confirmed by an independent checker. The following Table

(6.2) gives a brief description of each Second Cycle coding techniques used in further organising the data for its analysis and interpretation of results for this research.

Table: 6.2: Second-Cycle coding methods

Coding type	Description (D)
	Example reference from the data coded (E)
Pattern coding	Description - Develops a 'meta-code' – i.e. a lead category that identifies similarly coded data (Miles and Huberman, 1994).
	<p>Example – codes such as :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflicts & disharmony - Irrelevant spending - Lack of leadership/responsibility - Politics - Troubled history <p>Leads to the formation of an over-arching categorical pattern code – 'Issues'.</p>
Focus coding	Description - It categorises the coded data based on thematic and conceptual similarity (Charmaz, 2006).
	<p>Example – development of the following theme shows categorical use of focus coding:</p> <p>Theme: Efforts Maintaining Progress –</p> <p>Sub-category: A – Challenges</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Concepts: 1. competition</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2. problem-solving</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">3. attracting inward investments</p> <p>Sub-category: B – Collaborative efforts</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Concepts: 1. commitment</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2. support</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">3. mutual coordination</p> <p>Sub-category: C – Interventions</p>

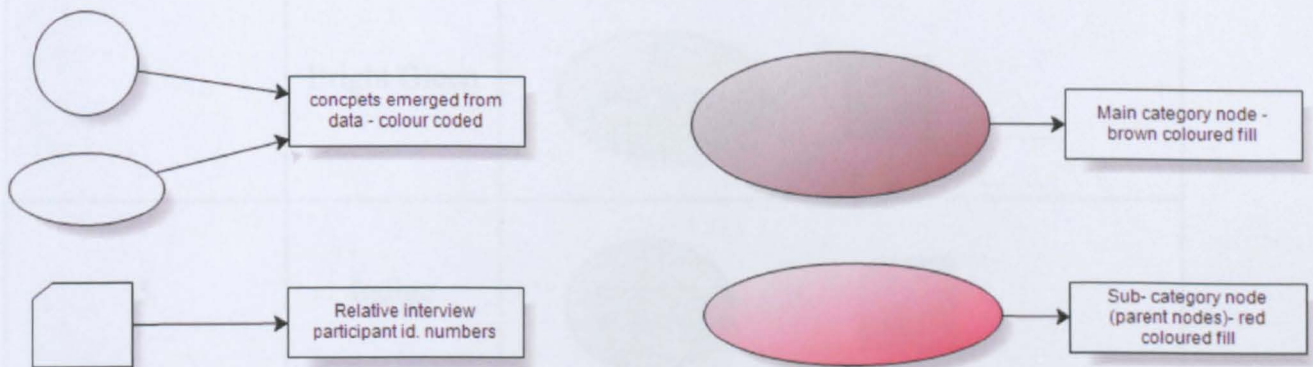
	<p>Concepts: 1. skills development</p> <p>2. promotion and advertisement</p> <p>3. objective vision</p>
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6.3 Coding key with examples

This sub-section will provide a guide to various shapes and colour codes used to outline a number of concepts emerged as a result of coding transcribed data using NVivo.

Following Figure (6.2) shows different shapes and their relative interpretation in a number of categorical diagrams to present research findings.

Figure 6.2: Identification of relative shapes



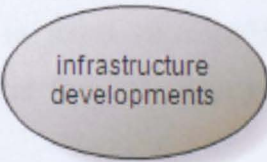


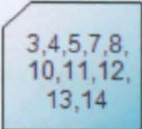

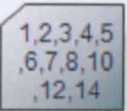

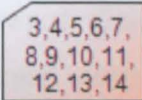

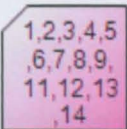
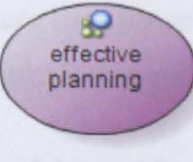
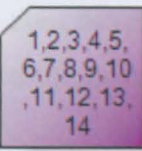
Identification by relative colour codes

Following Table (6.3) indicates a number of colour codes used to represent corresponding number of research participants relative to each concept emerged from the data:

Table 6.3: Colour codes

Number of sources coded = no. of interviewees	Colour code	Example of concepts coded and relative source id. number

1	Yellow	 Liverpool Vision	 5
2	Blue Grey	 economic stimulus	 10, 14
3	Orange	 The Mersey Partnership	 6, 8, 11
4	Bright Green	 accessibility	 5, 6, 8, 12
5	Indigo	 the culture company	 1, 2, 3, 12, 14
6	Gold	 visitors	 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12
7	Lime	 Liverpool city council	 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13
8	Lavender	 support	 1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14

9	Dark Yellow		
10	Aqua		
11	Teal		
12	Tan		
13	Rose		
14	Violet		

Chapter 7: Findings

This Chapter will present the findings in terms of identifying emerging concepts and categories which will set the stage for the thematic interpretation of results in the next chapter.

The presentation of the key findings in this chapter is given below:

- Section 7.1 outlines the role of a **major event** such as European Capital of Culture that was held in Liverpool in year 2008. It identifies key facets which emerged from the respondents and further distributes them into major categories i.e. Regeneration and Change;
- Section 7.2 identifies the **role of stakeholders** within place branding and further differentiates the key stakeholders into two categories namely: 'Creators' and 'Drivers'. Furthermore, this section also outlines the key issues in the application of place branding process;
- Section 7.3, first of all, explores the **range of perceptions** towards place branding and lists them into functional, symbolic, judgemental and emotional attributes. Secondly, it presents the findings that reflects the importance of place brand management and finally **identifies the key facets** that are considered essential requirements for a place to achieve '*world class*' status;
- Section 7.4 explores the **relationship between place branding and sustainable development** by establishing the factors that may assist in achieving sustainability such as the range of assets that a place may possess that are unexplored thus far, and then goes on to identify the key constructs that are required for sustainable growth.

7.1 The role of ECoC'08 in place branding Liverpool

The role of ECoC'08 in the place branding process was investigated via the question:

"What do you think the ECoC '08 brand campaign has brought to Liverpool?"

The responses involved discussion about ECoC and its significance in the development of Liverpool and the following figure (7.1) is derived from coding and modelling the respective responses of the participants via NVivo.

Moreover, the figure (7.1) indicates that 13 respondents consider ECoC a place brand catalyst and mention concepts such as city region development, tangible benefits, economic stimulus, achievement, extensive journey, new image and others as shown in the figure below. This confirms the findings of Nobili (2005) and Chorcai (2007) who note that ECoC has triggered similar positive brand building benefits in other European cities, and of Roche (2000), Hankinson (2005), Garcia (2005), and Gold and Gold (2008), all of whom report the positive effects of mega-events on place brand image.

However, figure (7.1) further indicates that the respondents also perceived a number of other concepts that aggregate and merge to create the two major sub-categories of 'Regeneration' and 'Change' as the main constructs within ECoC:

Regeneration – the figure below indicates this sub-category primarily comprises of concepts such as achievement in terms of reformed identity, city region development, tangible benefits and increased number of visitors. Moreover, it also comprises of other concepts such as the long-term motive to achieve world-class status, the extensive period of re-emergence that the 'City of Liverpool' has undergone, and the economic stimulus of investments and regional and European funding.

Change – this is the another sub-category shown in figure 7.1 below which primarily comprises concepts such as a new image, its increasing importance as a premier city in the North West of the UK, the cultural differences and infrastructural developments. Furthermore, concepts such as business opportunities on Merseyside (boom), high property market prices and accessibility, also have their relative input to the formation of this sub-category.

Constructs of regeneration and change will also be familiar within other mega-events such as staging the Olympics (or other world sporting events) and world fairs or exhibitions such as

Expo.

Figure 7.1: European Capital of Culture

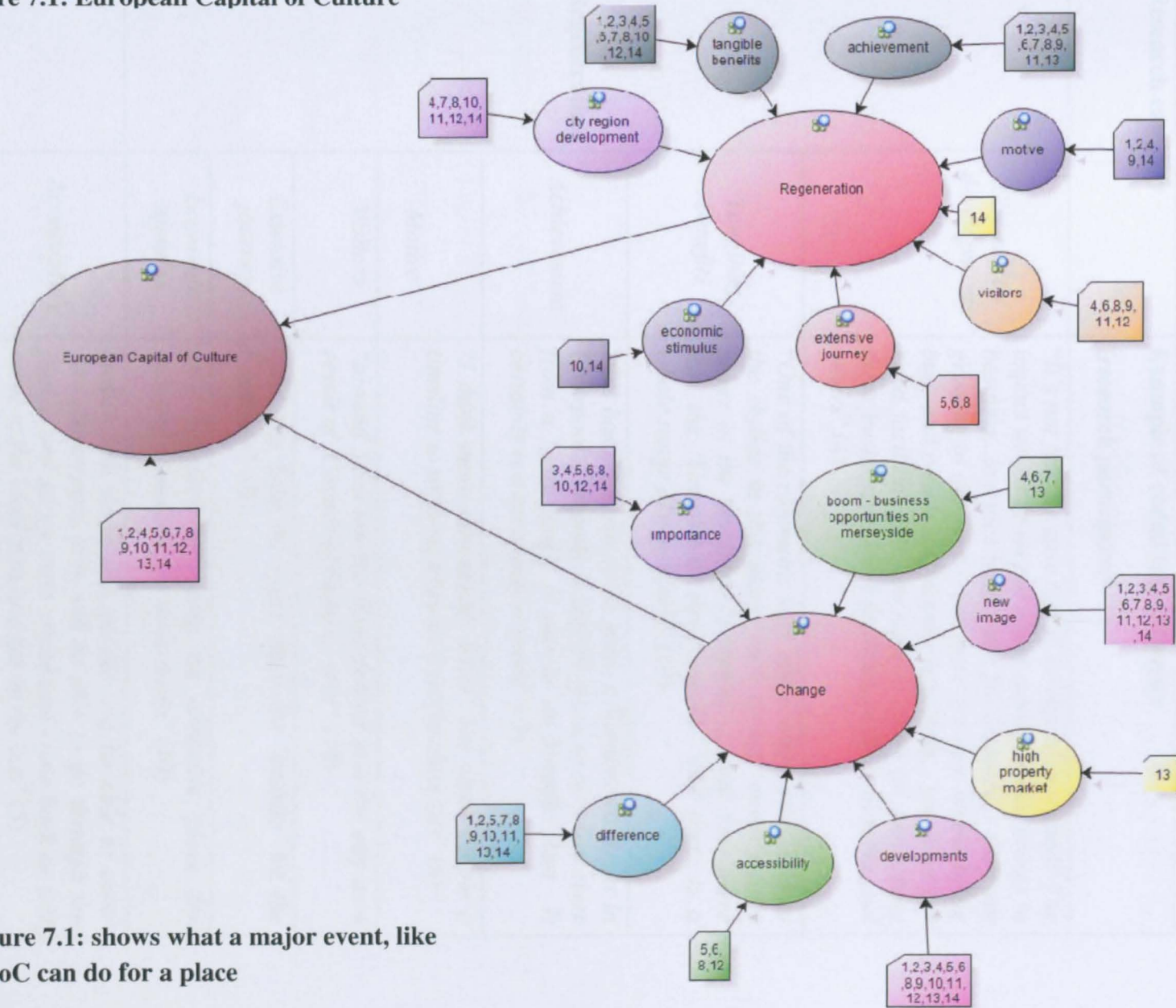


Figure 7.1: shows what a major event, like ECoc can do for a place

The following Table (7.1) provides examples of text references coded from research interviews and their relevant coding.

Table 7.1: European Capital of Culture category

Research category		Example of coded text reference <i>(research participant)</i>
Regeneration	City-region developments	<i>“It’s not just the case that is Liverpool any good? The impact would be on the wider aspect as that brings in business...logistics businesses for instance... they are growing in the area – you have got nice homes being built and people are moving into them... you have got good facilities and you need to carry on developing these businesses, local facilities such as housing and others” (4)</i>
	Tangible benefits	<i>“One of the comments very often stated was “look at the skyline in this place, look at how many cranes hover in the sky over Liverpool”.... and then there was the ‘Grosvenor’ development... and there is a whole range of new hotels” (14)</i>
	Achievement	<i>“this has been one of the great achievements so far in Liverpool... recently in last 30 years, to turn that river from a ‘vast stink’- it was in an horrific state It certainly is a great achievement” (3)</i>
	Motive	<i>“I think more importantly ECoC has given people a timeline to working towards a world class city” (9)</i>
	Visitors	<i>“around 3.5m tourists have poured into the city as a result of ‘Capital of Culture’ year” (12)</i>
	Extensive journey	<i>“and has been 40 years since the ‘Beatles’ hit the headlines” (5)</i>
	Economic stimulus	<i>“We benefited by being an attractive place for economic stimulus, for investments” (10)</i>
	Accessibility	<i>“which will mean that people will be able to come into the airport, they will be able to go through the port.... and go on their cruise and come back or just come to the local port and get on the bus” (5)</i>
	New image	<i>“Moreover, it is 3rd most popular visited city so far, and 5th most favourite shopping city. To me.. we have attracted some great culture here and these are all</i>

Change		<i>true figures available from media” (1/2)</i>
	<i>Importance</i>	<i>“Well, for once in Liverpool’s recent history, for these aspects: “it was all in the right place and in the right time” (10)</i>
	<i>Boom</i>	<i>“therefore... it has clearly given a rise to the business interest within Liverpool” (4)</i>
	<i>Developments</i>	<i>““Peel (Holdings)’ are talking about ‘Liverpool Waters’, the ‘Wirral Waters’... there is a huge future developmental programme for north Liverpool and across the Mersey river on the Wirral” (12)</i>
	<i>High property market</i>	<i>“new office developments have been increased in Liverpool recently with rate of office base going dramatically higher” (7)</i>
	<i>Difference</i>	<i>“Now... just 5 years ago... maybe 10 years ago, no one around would have said “let’s visit Liverpool for a weekend”.... Now it is the 3rd most favourite city after London and Edinburgh, which is absolutely amazing” (1/2)</i>

7.2 Exploring Place Brand Management

7.2.1 Identifying the stakeholders in place branding process

A range of key brand developers and drivers that shape, deliver and carry forward the Liverpool place brand, were identified within the interviews via the question:

“Who do you think are the major stakeholders of Liverpool place brand?”

The responses involved key authorities from local, regional and private sectors; who are continuously involved and responsible for developing and delivering Liverpool’s place brand.

The following figure (7.2) is derived from coding and modelling the respective responses via NVivo.

It appears that the respondents are clear that there is a discrete category of ‘Brand Creators’, but are less certain about the distinctions between the brand users (who may also be brand creators) and those who co-create the brand image. The term ‘Drivers’ therefore emerged as a collective term for all those who are involved with the brand, but do not specifically market the brand.

The brand creators appear to be those agencies and organisations who are proactively involved in developing and creating the Liverpool brand and include: The Mersey Partnership, The Culture Company and the Liverpool City Council. Some respondents also mention Liverpool Vision, Liverpool First and the Public and Private sector as well as the European Commission.

The main brand drivers appear to be the people, businesses, visitors, NWDA and an amorphous collection of 'other stakeholders' that were not specifically named by the respondents. Other advertising agencies, the Tourist Board, Private sector, County Council and City Leaders were also seen to be important.

It is also interesting that each of the main brand creators claim that brand development is their responsibility and make no reference to the other stakeholders or to any collaborative efforts.

These results confirm the findings of Morgan *et al*, (2004), Anholt, (2006), Hankinson, (2004) Farrell, (2008), van Gelder (2008) and others who note that place brands are multidimensional constructs with multiple stakeholder engagement. This research however, further identifies those stakeholder communities who have been involved in the Liverpool place branding process and categorises them into Brand Creators and Brand Drivers. This research also demonstrates a lack of communication between the key brand development agencies, further supporting the notion that place branding is largely an uncoordinated process.

Figure 7.2: Place Brand Stakeholders

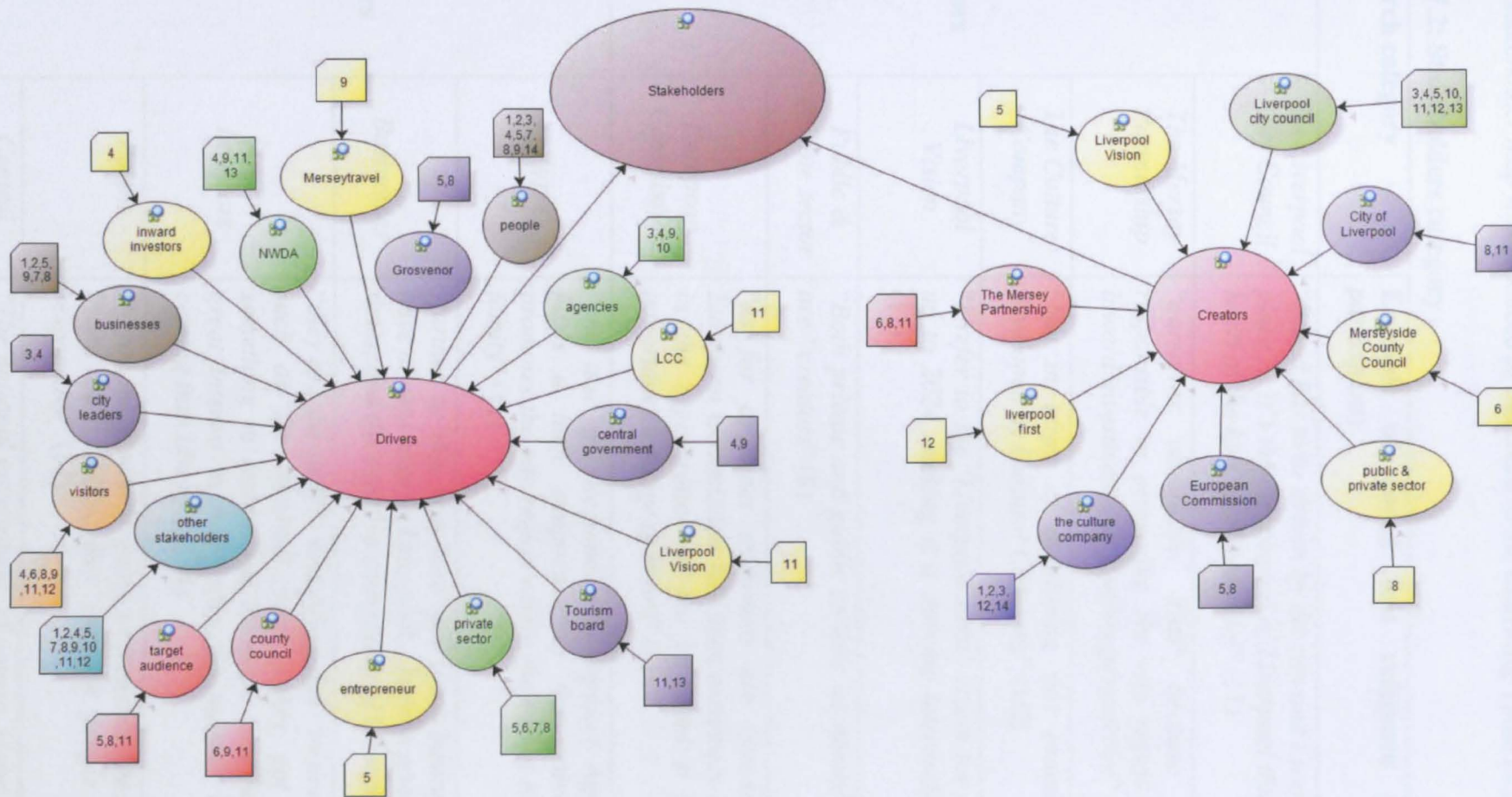


Figure 7.2 shows who the place brand stakeholders are

Examples of interview responses in support of the concepts outlined in figure (7.2) from which the stakeholder map was produced as indicated in the following Table (7.2).

Table 7.2: Stakeholders category

Research category		Example of coded text reference (<i>research participant</i>)
Creators	<i>The Liverpool City Council</i>	<i>“Brand has to be driven by the city and Liverpool as a place..... it’s the city council of Liverpool that is at the heart of the Liverpool branding” (11)</i>
	<i>The Mersey Partnership</i>	<i>“ourselves absolutely: TMP because we are responsible in promoting the city region from an inward investment and tourism perspective” (11)</i>
	<i>The Culture Company</i>	<i>“But in terms of developing this brand, it was developed by Cultural Company” (1/2)</i>
	<i>Liverpool Vision</i>	<i>“I refer to the ‘Liverpool First’ vision for Liverpool up to 2024, making it a thriving international city” (12)</i>
	<i>Public & Private sector</i>	<i>“Both private and public sectors, as named earlier... are “creators” (8)</i>
	<i>European Commission</i>	<i>“as far as other audiences are concerned, the European Commission has been extremely important in the regeneration of the city and it has been important for range of issues” (5)</i>
Drivers	<i>NWDA</i>	<i>“and also the Regional Development Agency that funds a huge proportion of the activities that promotes the city region within the sort of North West family” (11)</i>
	<i>Businesses</i>	<i>“further to this you have got local businesses that have always been in Liverpool... both in good and bad times, and the creative community of Liverpool” (7)</i>
	<i>Inward Investors</i>	<i>“they are the people who bring their businesses here such as the Marriott hotel... they got to have something in return and therefore they have got a great interest in increasing the number of people coming into Liverpool” (4)</i>
	<i>People</i>	<i>“If you mean who is going to translate the Liverpool brand into reality, they are the people who are responsible” (14)</i>
	<i>Central</i>	<i>“The national government, of course, is the important</i>

	<i>Government</i>	<i>stakeholder here” (4)</i>
	<i>Tourism board</i>	<i>“The tourist authorities and the tourist boards are very keenly focusing on tourism” (13)</i>
	<i>Visitors</i>	<i>“ECoC programme including the promotion, branding and advertising has brought in an enormous number of visitors, first time visitors, UK visitors, day visitors, people from all over the UK and good number of people, internationally, all of these carry forward some sort of image of Liverpool” (6)</i>
	<i>Agencies</i>	<i>“There also some less well-known ones such as the likes of LCVS which is the Voluntary community sector and the third sector and they are of importance for Liverpool’s future as any other aspect... I think” (10)</i>
	<i>City leaders</i>	<i>“and then you have politicians who have many other things to do in the light of the city” (4)</i>

7.2.2 Exploring the issues in place brand management

The factors that can directly affect the growth prospects and development opportunities in Liverpool and its brand image were identified at interviews via the question:

“What are the major difficulties and obstacles that Liverpool faces to its development?”

The following Figure (7.3), Table (7.3) and subsequent discussion are derived from coding and modelling the responses via NVivo.

Figure 7.3: Place branding issues

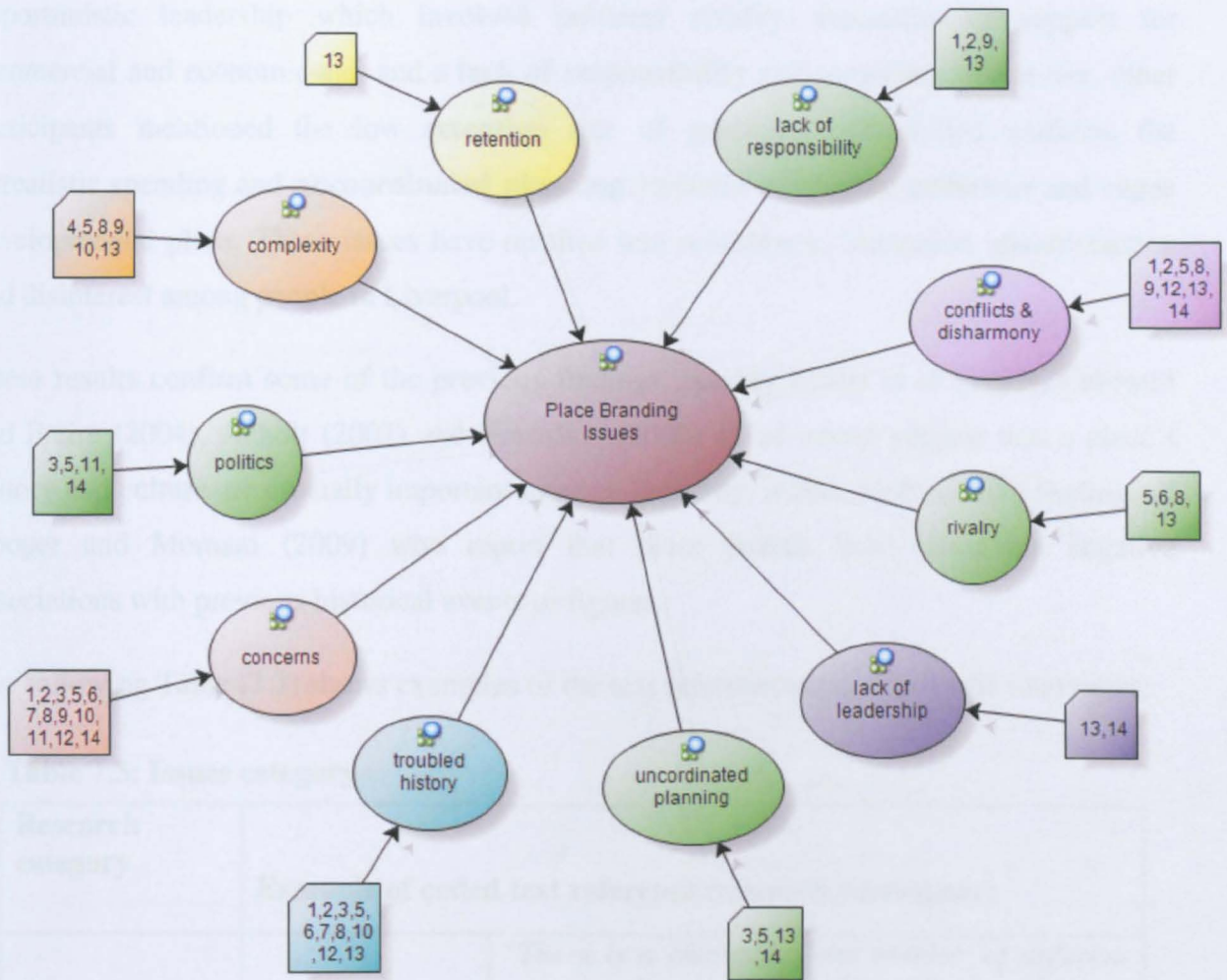


Figure 7.3 shows the main issues that relate to place brand management

Figure 7.3 displays a range of concepts that have been collated together to form an ‘issues’ category. These concepts include various facets such as the **troubled history** of Liverpool involving industrial decline, riots and communal unease, followed by **conflicts and disharmony** that still exist in certain parts of Liverpool causing a high degree of political **complexity** and continued dissatisfaction among certain disadvantaged communities and geographical localities. Other concepts also involve in this category such as **concerns** about business continuity: about industrial clusters and ancillary trades, surviving in the climate

where there has been over-ambitious modernisation and outsourcing, as derived by the respondents.

Furthermore, some respondents also mentioned issues relating to the disoriented and highly opportunistic leadership which involved **political rivalry**, inequality of support for commercial and economic-aid, and a **lack of responsibility** and ownership. Moreover, other participants mentioned the low **retention** rate of graduates and skilled workers, the unrealistic spending and **uncoordinated planning** portfolio and highly ambitious and vague developmental plans. These issues have resulted into resentment, frustration, dissatisfaction and disinterest among people in Liverpool.

These results confirm some of the previous findings, notably Kotler *et al* (1993), Caldwell and Freire (2004), Anholt (2007) and Hornskov (2007) all of whom suggest that a place's history and culture are crucially important in place branding: it also reinforces the findings of Cooper and Momani (2009) who report that place brands must overcome negative associations with previous historical events or figures.

The following Table (7.3) shows examples of the text references coded from the interviews:

Table 7.3: Issues category

Research category	Example of coded text reference (<i>research participant</i>)	
Issues	<i>Complexity</i>	<i>“There is a challenge with number of different agencies that are involved in different things...” (8)</i>
	<i>Retention</i>	<i>“Liverpool has got an awful lot of churn facing it, really..... and within this context we cannot afford to lose an inch of what we have gained in terms of reputation and good PR” (13)</i>
	<i>Politics</i>	<i>“But also there is far more bureaucracy, far less collaboration” (14)</i>
	<i>Lack of responsibility</i>	<i>“but yes.... there is a fear that there is not any dedicated or specific team focusing on the issues” (1/2)</i>
	<i>Concerns</i>	<i>“we actually have a lot of problems, especially in the north of the city because of the worklessness, poor educational attainment,</i>

		<i>poor health, high crime” (5)</i>
	<i>Troubled history</i>	<i>“although we had a rich musical heritage at the time, but from mid 70s to mid 80s, for a very short time in Liverpool’s history... it did have some real social problems....” (10)</i>
	<i>Uncoordinated planning</i>	<i>“but for a long time there was a lot of disillusionment.... and then disengagement with the vast majority of the community.... with Capital of Culture – it meant nothing to them” (13)</i>
	<i>Lack of leadership</i>	<i>“I think in the early process there was clearly major managerial operational ‘cock-ups’.... they changed personnel quite a few times, which demonstrated that they did not get it right, the first time!!” (14)</i>
	<i>Rivalry</i>	<i>“All it does is gives the opposition an ammunition....which is not political opposition, it is Liverpool’s opposition.... the global opposition” (5)</i>
	<i>Conflicts & disharmony</i>	<i>“Domestically... it has been a greatest challenge for us, because you have got deep-seeded stereotypes that have been created way back by real events like riots, football tragedies...so I think...rectifying and eliminating internal conflict is the real challenge” (8)</i>

7.3 Liverpool as a Place Brand

7.3.1 Perceptions of Liverpool

A range of key attributes that highlights how Liverpool as a place is perceived were identified within the interviews via the question:

“How do you think Liverpool is perceived as a place both internally and externally?”

The responses involved both general and specific attributes that individuals associate Liverpool’s place brand with and are listed in the following figure (7.4).

The following Figure (7.4) shows that attributes are recorded into four major categories namely:

1. *Symbolic* – this category demonstrates identification in terms of gratitude, appreciation or dislike;
2. *Judgemental* – this category represents the views that evaluates Liverpool’s place brand;
3. *Functional* – this category notifies the developments and infrastructural improvements of Liverpool’s place brand; and
4. *Emotional* – this category represents the feelings towards the place brand.

In addition, there is one more category separate from above mentioned cohort and named as ‘*New brand perceptions*’ which includes any other perceptions or attitudes interpreted by the research participants for ‘Liverpool – place brand’.

This categorical formation resulted from the emergence of a range of perceptual or attributive concepts from positive and negative place images to reluctance or interest, and from civic pride and confidence to infrastructure developments, better logistics and improved housing facilities, mentioned respectively within the responses of the research participants, as key factors while reflecting upon ‘place brand’ of Liverpool in terms of perceptions. A full list of concepts emerged from the responses is displayed by the below diagram attached to their relative categories.

Symbolic – one of the four categories that has been assembled as a result of grouping together the attributes demonstrating intangible qualities such as gratitude, appreciation and other representational characteristics of Liverpool’s place brand, mentioned by the

respondents. The figure (7.4) clearly shows that all the respondents mentioned image of a place brand as a critical concept (although this may be in terms of lasting image, global image, negative or creative images). Recognition in terms of being familiar with the brand was also seen as an important category and several mentioned Liverpool's importance as one of the most favourable places in the North West of the UK.

However, two-thirds of respondents highlighted the **negative press** about its history of deprivation and high crime rate which could affect its progress and a few of them further raised concerns about the **safety and well-being** issues in Liverpool. Two respondents also mentioned **regret** in the context that those who miss out on the Liverpool experience would regret it.

Judgemental – the data supporting figure 7.4 indicates that the majority of the respondents thought **opinions** and views towards Liverpool as an unfavourable place has been converted by the recent place branding campaign and ECoC'08 and believed that these efforts have generated a fresh **interest** and desire in local residents to take pride in their city and visitors (both business and tourist) to explore the city.

In addition, nearly one-third of the respondents believe that the place branding campaign has helped overcome the **reluctance** that some had about visiting and settling in Liverpool and this has been reinforced by those respondent views who strongly suggest that ECoC and the branding exercise has eradicated most of the **negative misconceptions** held about Liverpool and has developed a brand new refreshing and positive image of the city. However, there are still some of the respondents who think that Liverpool is a kind of place that is either 'hated' or 'loved' and thus, possesses these kinds of **extreme perceptions** with nothing in between.

Emotional – the majority of the respondents mentioned that the ECoC'08 and the extensive developments have brought a fresh wave of **self-belief** within the residents of Liverpool which has encouraged them to contribute towards the success of the place and further believe that the physical redevelopment within the city has lifted the morale of people and encouraged them to take greater **pride** in their city.

Moreover, some of the respondents also suggested that overall **feelings** were positive and emotions have been running very high, particularly towards the end of 2008 which has also

benefited individuals and businesses by raising **confidence** in Liverpool interns of achieving success, and long-term prosperity.

Functional – this category represents a range of concepts that demonstrates new, tangible developments and how they are perceived by the respondents.

The figure (7.4) shows that majority of responses suggested that recent **infrastructure developments** such as new Arena and convention centre, L1 shopping area, developments at Liverpool John Lennon airport, M6 motorway extension within Edge Lane – ‘Gateway to Liverpool’ project, new Cruise Liner terminal and **improved logistics** in terms of accessibility, technology and transportation has helped develop positive attributes in terms of functionality. Moreover, some of the respondents also mentioned the growing **hospitality sector** and **modernised housing facilities** and lifestyle standards as important concepts influencing functional attributes of Liverpool.

New brand perceptions – finally, the figure (7.4) also shows that most of the respondents suggested ‘Change’ resulting from ECoC’08 has refreshed the overall image of Liverpool by removing terms such as dislike and decline and introducing a new brand identity of a place that is full of opportunities and excitement, with modernised infrastructure and housing facilities, magnificent arts, architecture and interesting culture and heritage, and equally as important, a place that is now one of the leading places in the UK in terms of safety and security for its members of public and full of opportunities for businesses.

Figure 7.4: Place Brand Attributes

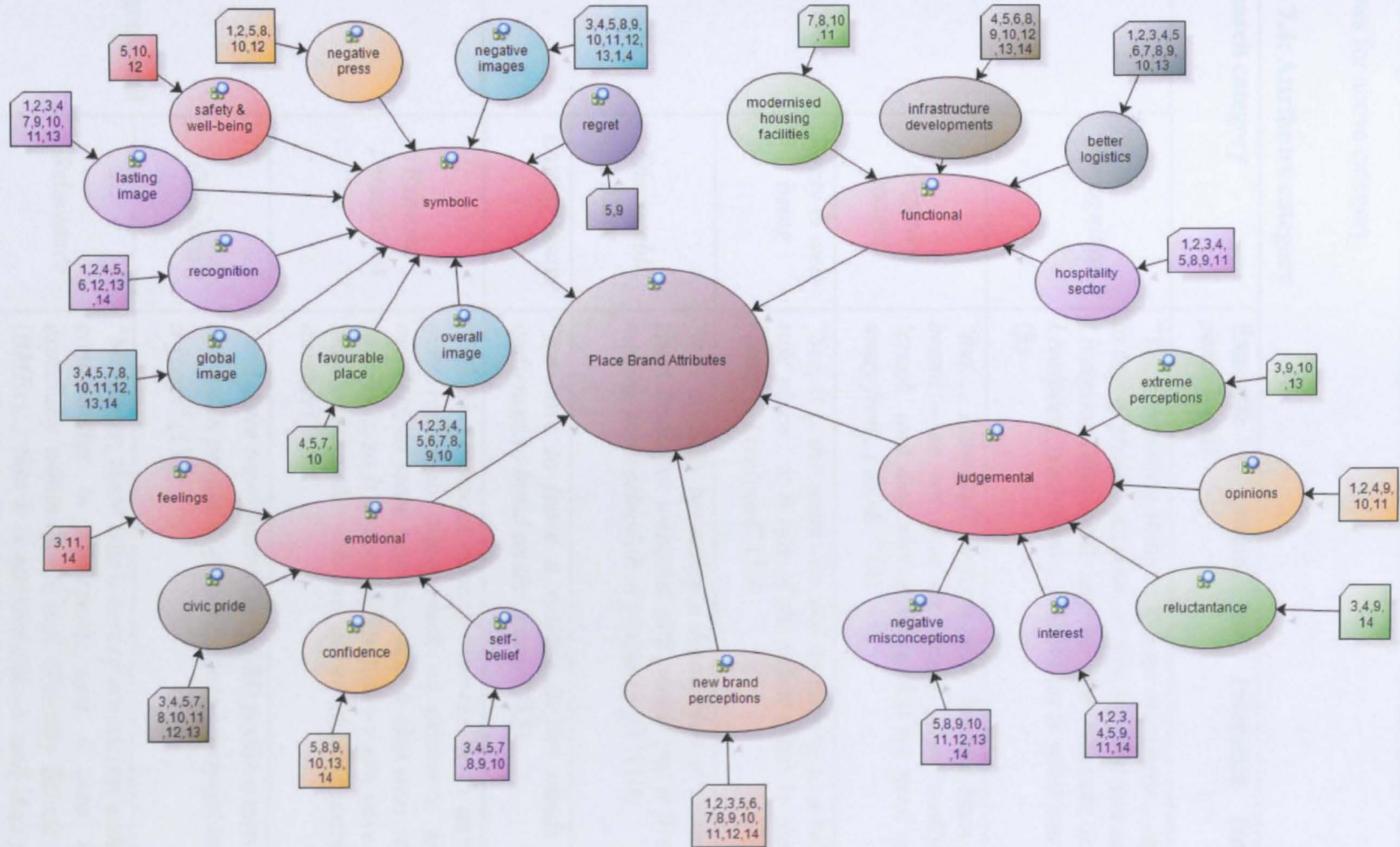


Figure 7.4 shows how a place is conceptualised in its component parts

The following Table (7.4) show examples of text references coded from the research interviews for above category.

Table 7.4: Attributes category

Research category		Example of coded text reference (<i>research participant</i>)
Symbolic	Recognition	<i>"The interesting thing is if I go anywhere... and I go to lots of places...as soon as you say that you are from Liverpool, they will say or the reaction is: "oh! Liverpool, yes I know...." and that is what you need!"</i> (5)
	Negative images	<i>"but..... Liverpool, in particular, has not been a good brand – as we have an image of a 'scally' or a 'crook' and that sort of thing that we need to move away from..i think.."</i> (4)
	Safety & well-being	<i>"See, it is the same city and its turning to a relatively safe place... it is one of the safest cities in the whole country, Liverpool"</i> (10)
	Favourable place	<i>"it is actually becoming a destination of choice for a short break for weekend, and people put it first while making their selection of places to go"</i> (10)
	Lasting image	<i>"we have to leave a residue in the minds of the audiences to build on the future"</i> (13)
Judgemental	Extreme perceptions	<i>"I think Liverpool always over-reacts to anything... over reacts to things such as disasters, to some murders, to some tragedies and it also over reacts to success.... so it is very difficult as we are never in the middle ground... we are either at one extreme or another!"</i> (3)
	Opinions	<i>"and there have been a incredible positive turn around in people's opinions about Liverpool in last 5-6 years"</i> (11)
	Reluctance	<i>"Moreover, there was a sort of scepticism with lots of communities in Liverpool, and it was heard... especially within Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BMEs).... that it is not our culture and thus not our year of culture because it has very little or no impact on our community"</i> (14)
	Interest	<i>"but... Liverpool is very well perceived by people both outside and inside as an exciting place where</i>

		<i>something is 'happening' (1/2)</i>
	<i>Negative misconception</i>	<i>"It is also clear nonsense of politicians asking people and businesses of the Northern Britain to move to the south of the country if they want to progress and develop further.... as more opportunities are available down there, which is absolutely untrue" (11)</i>
Emotional	<i>Civic pride</i>	<i>"People in Liverpool now possess a sense of civic pride for their city which was missing in last 20-25 years for various reasons!" (7)</i>
	<i>Confidence</i>	<i>"however, the harder to measure but I would say equally, if not, as important such as the 'return of civic pride' within the city...and the feel good-factor.... the self-confidence that people in Liverpool has got now" (10)</i>
	<i>Belief</i>	<i>"and it has made people to believe that Liverpool is different.... its thinking is different and things are happening here" (4)</i>
	<i>Feelings</i>	<i>"If you walk to the 'fountains' on Williamson square by Football clubs' shops in Liverpool town centre and go round there on a Saturday morning.... you would see there are kids running up and down with their parents through those fountains and that is what it is: engaging arts and engaging culture and that is what is very well perceived within middle class people" (14)</i>
Functional	<i>Infrastructure developments</i>	<i>"Definitely... the infrastructure has been unrecognisable now from the past. I mean, just the face of the city.... we are talking of place branding, and it has completely changed. It has completely changed from what it was 3 years ago" (7)</i>
	<i>Modernised housing facilities</i>	<i>"the new housing developments....especially by the docks and in the centre have been incredible...attracting young working class" (9)</i>
	<i>Hospitality sector</i>	<i>"We certainly have the new 'Hilton' opening, we have got 'Marriott', the Crown Plaza" (6)</i>
	<i>Better logistics</i>	<i>"the roads are better.... the airport is working properly... the docks are making money and thus the place works as a mechanical entity.... if you like" (3)</i>

New brand perceptions	<i>“that means that people want to be here and when they come having them so surprised.... that they want to come back “ (5)</i>
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The brand attributes identified in this study show close similarity to those reported elsewhere in the branding literature, so for instance, functional and emotional/symbolic attributes have been noted by Cooper, (1979) and by de Chernatony and McWilliam, (1989), whilst Kotler and Keller (2006) include “judgements” in their brand building prism.

This research further explores the sub-categories of these attributes with respect to brand building of Liverpool.

7.3.2 Exploring the importance of place brand management

The components that demonstrate importance of place branding were identified at interview via the question:

“Why do you think it is important to brand a place?”

The following Figure (7.5) and Table (7.5) and subsequent discussion are derived from respectively coding and modelling the relative responses via NVivo.

Figure 7.5: Place brand management

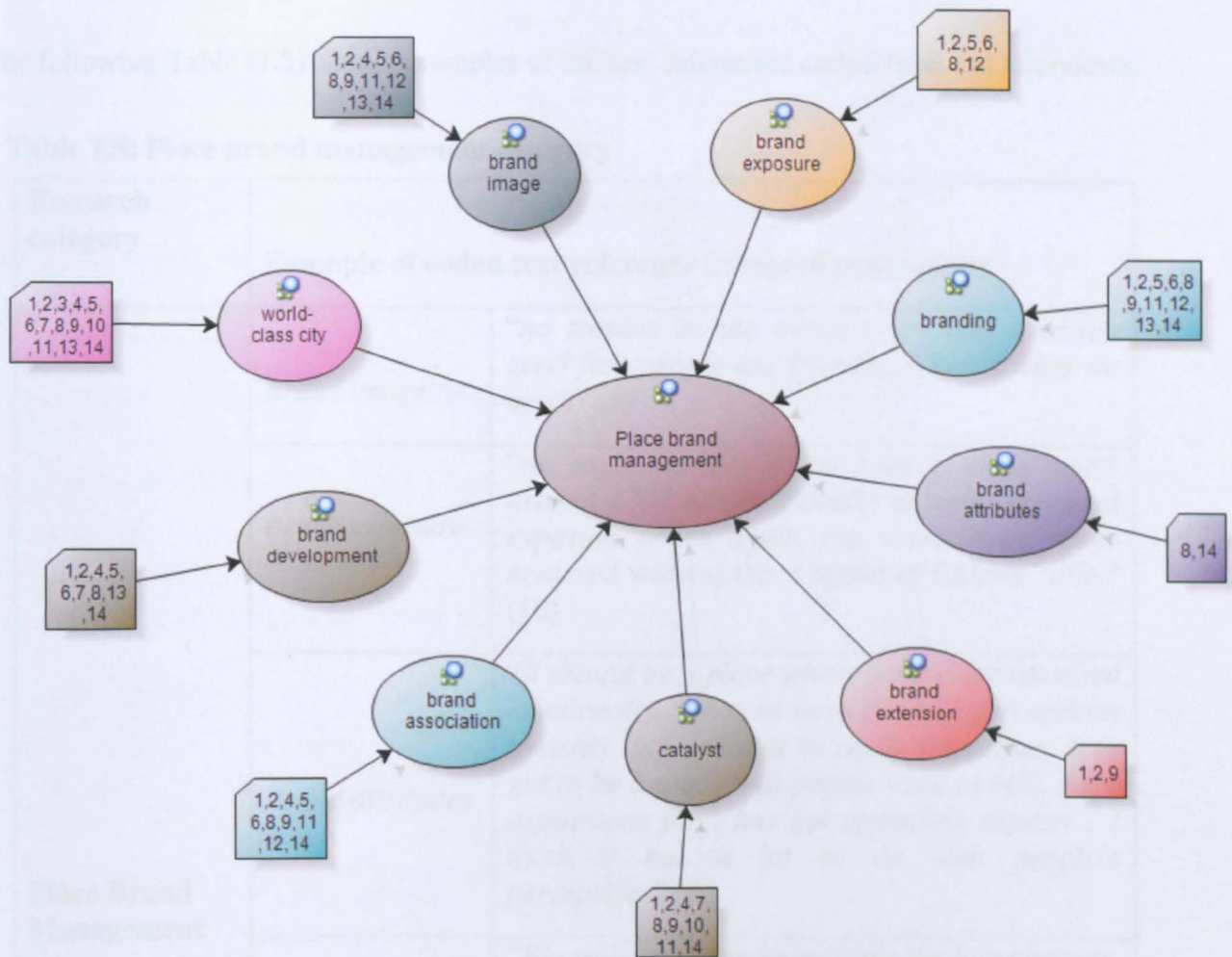


Figure 7.5 shows how ECoC has been a catalyst for brand development

The figure (7.5) demonstrates the findings related to the important category of ‘Place Brand Management’ as a result of the responses to the above interview question. Results indicate that most respondents mentioned **brand image**, **branding**, **brand association**, **brand development** and the development of a **world-class city** as the main concepts of the place branding campaign and most respondents (64%) emphasised the fact that ECoC had acted as a **catalyst** in repositioning the Liverpool place brand.

Other concepts outlined by respondents include **global brand exposure**, **brand extension** to diverse target audiences, development of positive **brand attributes** and increased interests in terms of considering Liverpool as a perspective place for relocation.

The following Table (7.5) shows examples of the text references coded from the interviews:

Table 7.5: Place brand management category

Research category	Example of coded text reference (<i>research participant</i>)	
Place Brand Management	<i>Brand image</i>	“no trouble in the evening, go out drinking, good fun, people are friendly.... that’s what we need!” (5)
	<i>Brand exposure</i>	“the exposure that it has been given is worth around £200 billion globally in terms of brand exposure which again you would have never achieved without the ‘Capital of Culture’ title.” (12)
	<i>Brand attributes</i>	“It should be a place where people are attached emotionally, it has to have positive perceptions towards it... and that is really important. It is got to be a place that people want to visit, have aspirations for... has got appealing aspects... I think it has a lot to do with people’s perceptions” (8)
	<i>Brand association</i>	“Big private sector brands like the hotel brands, big retail brands, are now physically here.... so people come and immediately they equate it (Liverpool) with the Radisson Hotel, with John Lewis partnership, by whatever it may be!” (6)
	<i>Catalyst</i>	“ECoC has addressed Liverpool in a different way to the various stakeholders and has helped raised the profile of the city” (4)
	<i>Brand development</i>	“We are now to launch a changed brand for the city which we hope everybody will use in their marketing, everybody wherever... this is the Liverpool brand which we can all stand up to” (5)

	World-class status	“You look at New York and Paris and somewhere like Sydney, Shanghai, you look at cities like that, not only do you have instant recognisability, but they also have something extra about them.... I put Liverpool in that class” (5)
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7.3.3 Exploring the requirements of a World Class City

The main benefits that make Liverpool as a favourable place to visit, work and settle were identified at interview via the question:

“Is Liverpool capable of taking its place on the list of World Class Cities?”

The following Figure (7.6), Table (7.6) and subsequent discussion are derived from coding and modelling the relative interview responses via NVivo.

Figure 7.6: Requirements for place brand development

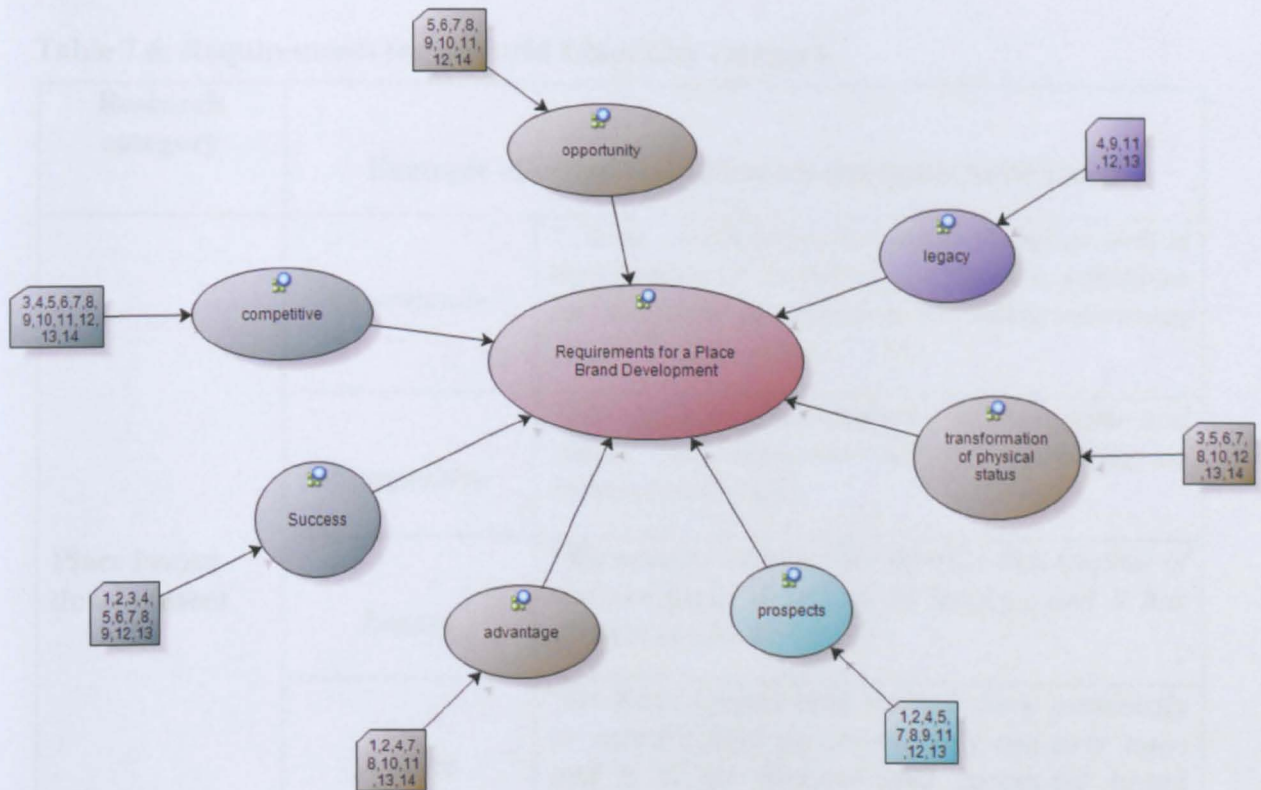


Figure 7.6 shows what is required for the development of a world class city

A number of concepts demonstrating Liverpool as a place with fresh and new image which is highly competitive, full of opportunities and providing ample growth prospect emerge out from research responses. These concepts contribute to the development of 'Requirements for a World Class City' category. The above figure (7.6) shows that respondents perceive 'place brand development' to mainly comprise of concepts such as overall **physical transformation** in terms of modernised infrastructure and improved logistics, increased growth **prospects**, highly **competitive** offerings to diverse target audience, and recent **success** of a mega-event (ECoC'08) which led to huge inward investments, ample media propagation and continuous developments through regeneration.

On the other hand, other concepts such as increased business and employment opportunities, inherent legacies in terms of sports, music, culture and arts, and numerous other advantages such as skilled labour force, improved housing facilities, leisure and entertainment and training provisions were also perceived to be important.

The following Table (7.6) shows the example of text references coded from research participant's interview in relation to the above concepts.

Table 7.6: Requirements for a World Class City category

Research category	Example of coded text reference (<i>research participant</i>)	
Place brand development	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>"...also....what happened in Liverpool as well is the opening of corridors of affluence, corridors for economic development providing enormous opportunity to grow...."</i> (14)
	<i>Competitive</i>	<i>"Liverpool is now compared to Barcelona and places like that...and not to Newcastle or Birmingham!!"</i> (8)
	<i>Legacy</i>	<i>"We need to build on the benefits that Capital of Culture gave to us and its legacy....and it has given a good focus"</i> (12)
	<i>Success</i>	<i>"So those brands that weren't here previously or weren't here as prominently are here now, and it is an effective and successful brand association for Liverpool"</i> (6)
		<i>"So all these aspects still suggest that we have got enough resources for the time when a</i>

	<i>Advantage</i>	<i>upturn in the economy comes to grab the opportunities then which we did not had in 1980s" (7)</i>
	<i>Transformation of physical status</i>	<i>"if you looked at Liverpool in last 5-10 years, it has just transformed itself beyond belief" (14)</i>
	<i>Prospects</i>	<i>"And we have the actual prospects what people want: such as we have increasing GDP here, the economy is here, the drive is here and the art is here too" (1/2)</i>

7.4 Exploring the relationship between place brands and sustainable development

7.4.1 Factors assisting sustainability

The primary brand assets that might assist in sustaining growth and development were identified at interview via the question:

"What do you think are the main brand assets required for the sustainable development of Liverpool?"

Figure (7.7), Table (7.7) and the subsequent discussion are derived from coding and modelling the participant responses via NVivo.

Figure 7.7: Place brand assets

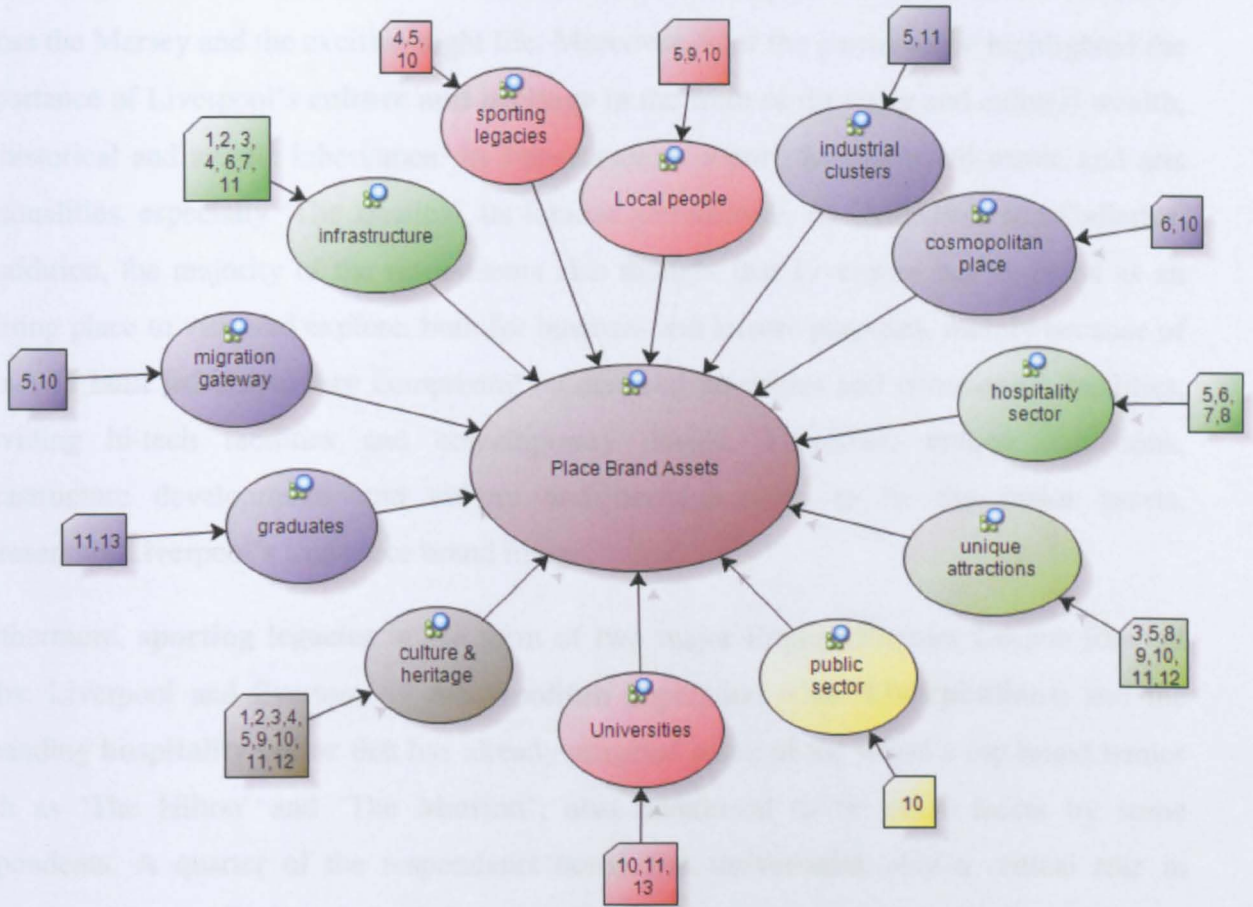


Figure 7.7 shows what assets need to be in place to enhance the brand

The above figure shows a range of concepts grouped together, that have been identified as the frontline aspects in terms of development and regeneration, that contribute to the formation of an umbrella-category of 'Place Brand Assets'. These concepts are further tagged as primary elements, which possess specific features that directly influence the brand image of Liverpool as a place. These concepts range from infrastructure and logistics, hospitality to heritage, cosmopolitan population to unique arts, music and cultural history, from traditional educational institutions & its graduates to galleries, monuments and tourist attractions.

The figure above shows that half of the respondents believed that Liverpool already possess a leading edge due to its **unique attractions** such as the UNESCO heritage site of magnificent waterfronts and docks, festivals, famous 'Grand National' at Aintree Race Course, Europe's oldest 'China Town', Anfield and Goodison Park, the birthplace of the Beatles, the Ferry across the Mersey and the exciting night life. Moreover, $\frac{2}{3}$ of the participants highlighted the importance of Liverpool's **culture and heritage** in the form of diversity and cultural wealth, its historical and artistic inheritance: its importance as a port, its renowned music and arts personalities, especially 'The Beatles', its famous architecture, its Cathedrals and Galleries. In addition, the majority of the respondents also thought that Liverpool has emerged as an exciting place to visit and explore, both for business and leisure purposes, mainly because of its newly built **infrastructure** comprising modernised amenities and commercial facilities, providing hi-tech facilities and contemporary design. Therefore, unique attractions, infrastructure developments and culture and heritage seem to be the major assets, representing Liverpool's true place brand image.

Furthermore, **sporting legacies** in the form of two major English Premier League football clubs: Liverpool and Everton; its **cosmopolitan** population – the **Liverpudlians**; and the expanding **hospitality sector** that has already attracted some of the world's top brand names such as 'The Hilton' and 'The Marriott'; also mentioned to be other facets by some respondents. A quarter of the respondents noted that **universities** play a critical role in enhancing Liverpool's brand through knowledge transfer and high level skills among its **graduates**.

Other facets include the strengthening **public sector** due to reformed governance policies, traditional **industrial clusters** representing Liverpool's trade history, and an overall ability to cater for tourists as important dimensions. Generally, the majority of the respondents (around $\frac{2}{3}$ of them) thought that Liverpool as a place now possesses enough capacity and capability to compete with other nationally and internationally developed cities and places.

The following Table (7.7) shows examples of text references coded from the research interviews in relation to Place Brand Assets.

Table 7.7: Assets category

Research category	Example of coded text reference (<i>research participant</i>)	
Assets	<i>Infrastructure & logistics</i>	<i>“There are number of physical assets that we have in the city now like the new arena, the conference centre, Liverpool One (L1) and its shopping facilities, the cruise-liner terminal... a dozen brand new hotels including some of the biggest brands in the world” (6)</i>
	<i>Hospitality sector</i>	<i>“and it’s no mistake... never ever... that the Hilton has decided to build a hotel here because it can see the business” (5)</i>
	<i>Cosmopolitan place</i>	<i>“You would hear a Spaniard, Russian, you will see people from China, Japan, from the Asian sub-continent, and you will see people from all over the world”(6)</i>
	<i>Universities & graduates</i>	<i>“We have great universities which have made some remarkable achievements in terms of knowledge transfer and research in last 10 years.... Fabulous learning environment, internationally renowned, popular... well-known place for students to come to study” (11)</i>
	<i>Unique attractions</i>	<i>“To keep ticking on the increasing number of people visiting Liverpool... we had developed major attractions such as fantastic waterfronts which has been named as ‘UNESCO’s World Heritage Site’... we have museums, theatres, state-of-art culture and many more to offer.” (4)</i>
	<i>Culture and heritage</i>	<i>“There is heritage ingrained in cities, more than just a logo... it comes to stand for something and where they have got that heritage, its history, it is when we become more aware of what they are!” (12)</i>
	<i>Arts</i>	<i>“The great cities need to have great institutions and you have got those here, and we have also managed to sustain the arts in the form of ‘The Tate’, ‘The Walker’ and thank god for that!!”(2)</i>
	<i>Migration gateway</i>	<i>“5 out of 6 immigrants from the whole of Europe, they were on their way to United States</i>

		<i>or South Africa, they came through here” (5)</i>
	<i>Public sector</i>	<i>“We do have a higher proportion than I think probably anywhere in the country of public sector jobs... I think the public sector is by far our biggest employer” (10).</i>
	<i>Industrial clusters</i>	<i>“So we are also focusing even on the sub-disciplines of the environmental technology as there are more than 20 of them available, with little explored about them, from solar technology to batteries and processing of bio-masses.... there is a huge potential” (11)</i>
	<i>Ancillary trades</i>	<i>“For instance, while talking about the strengths, we should consider the automotive industry, and we have got real strength in this sector and its supply chain but the reality is that we are looking at the retention of the automotive sector rather than expansion and real long term growth because of the current economic trend!” (11)</i>
	<i>Sporting legacies</i>	<i>“I also think that sporting legacy of Liverpool and the two football stadium has played their part both internationally and nationally.” (4)</i> <i>“We have world-famous Aintree Racecourse where the ‘Grand National’ takes place once every year....and it attracts tremendous amount of race lovers from all around the world to Liverpool” (3)</i>

The Brand Assets identified in this project clearly build on those which have been previously identified e.g. Anholt (2004; 2006) de Chernatony (2006), Pryor and Grossbart, (2007), Kotler and Gertner, (2004), Morgan *et.al.* (2004), but at the same time, this study also identifies new attributes not previously recorded, e.g. the need for industrial clusters and ancillary trades, universities and graduate workers, as well as the influence of the public sector in determining brand image.

7.4.2 Requirements for sustainable growth

The key concepts that need to be given careful consideration to achieve future growth and sustainable development in Liverpool were identified at interview via the question:

“How do you think Liverpool can achieve sustainability in terms of future growth and continuous development?”

The following Figures (7.8.1) and (7.8.2), Tables (7.8.1) and (7.8.2) and subsequent discussion are derived from coding and modelling the various responses via NVivo.

The figure (7.8.1) shows that there are three major sub-categories emerging which contribute to achieving sustainable growth: these are **collaborative efforts**, **challenges** and **interventions**.

Collaborative efforts

Collaborative efforts appears to comprise of concepts such as **support**, **mutual coordination**, **commitment**, **training**, **involvement** and defining **responsibility** as major elements; although, **effective leadership** was also found to be important.

Challenges

This sub-category comprises of concepts such as attracting **inward investments**, continuous availability of **resources**, overcoming issues of **criticism** and **credit crunch** as major factors; whereas, concepts such as generating **income**, increased **funding opportunities**, overcoming **competition**, attracting major **events** and carrying out **reforms** and **welfare** programmes were also found to important elements.

Interventions

The results in the figure below (7.8.1) shows concepts of continuous **progress**, effective **planning** involving key place specific facets, clear **vision** implementing realistic objectives and ongoing **promotion and advertisements** to be the major elements within ‘Interventions’ sub-category.

Other concepts such as a **rational approach** to development, **revitalisation** of place image, **skills development** for local people and **research** in terms of place brand development were also found to be important; whereas, some of the respondents also mentioned concepts of increased **business opportunities** and **entrepreneurial support** to be equally crucial.

Figure 7.8.1 is shown on the next page.

Figure 7.8.1: Requirements for sustainable growth

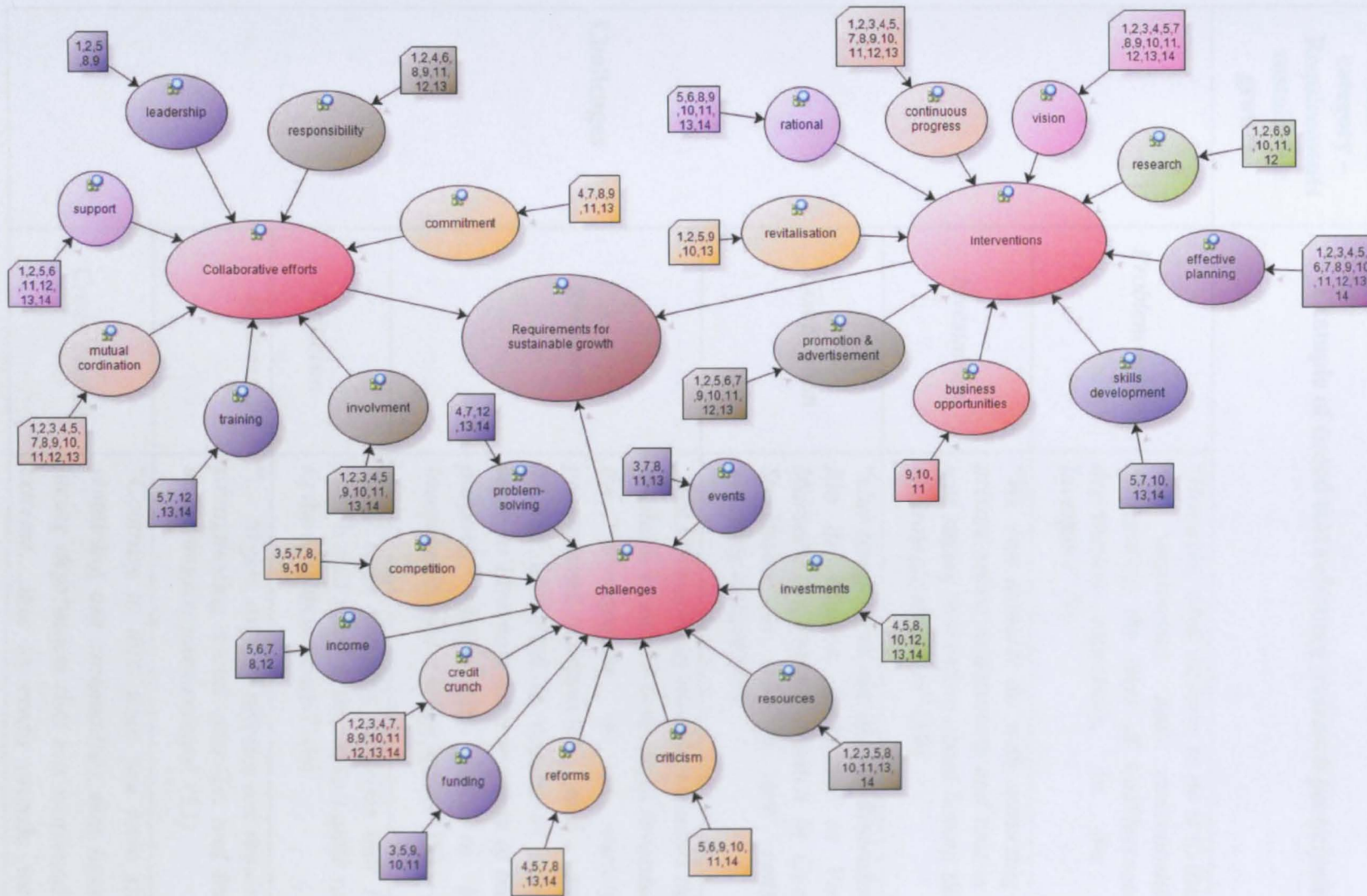


Figure 7.8.1 shows what is necessary for sustainable growth

The following Table (7.8.1) shows examples of text references coded from the research interviews in relation to 'Requirements for sustainable growth'.

Table 7.8.1: Requirements sustainable growth category

Research category – Requirements sustainable growth	Example of coded text reference (<i>research participant</i>)	
Challenges	<i>Problem-solving</i>	<i>“However, what we have to do is to look into our weaknesses and concentrate on overcoming the likes of worklessness and deprivation....especially, in the north Liverpool” (7)</i>
	<i>Investments</i>	<i>“We can actually do with attracting more private sector investments and that is why I was saying that before about having this sort of strategic structure” (10)</i>
	<i>Competition</i>	<i>“Our competitors, the likes of Rotterdam and Rio de Janeiro, Richmond in Virginia, Marseille in France, Munich in Germany, Stockholm in Sweden are constantly watching us here” (5)</i>
	<i>Resources</i>	<i>“that there are not enough resources that are available to ensure continuous investment on the development of a variety of programmes...campaigns and projects around Liverpool to appeal to people to come to Liverpool both in terms of business purpose, which may lead to inward investments, and tourism means” (8)</i>
	<i>Criticism</i>	<i>“.....I think the only criticism that I have seen is that some of that hasn't quite reached to the neighbourhoods!” (9)</i>
	<i>Reforms</i>	<i>“.....urgent steps of reforms are required for strengthening social cohesion and building up community partnerships” (13)</i>
	<i>Credit crunch</i>	<i>“Contrary to this, what you have still got remaining are communities that have been facing deprivation that has worsened to its extreme.....due to credit crunch, we have</i>

		<p><i>extreme economic challenges.....” (14)</i></p> <p><i>“For instance, over next 2 years due to the current economically difficult times, most parts of the country will lose jobs and the growth will become stagnant” (7)</i></p>
	Events	<p><i>“...but there were few things...I think, that exist anywhere in the world...so you have got the Olympic games – which obviously is one of the greatest events, then you become host of it and it provides a significant catalyst. Commonwealth games are another opportunity” (8)</i></p>
	Income	<p><i>“...and our actual future lies in the growth of wealth.....by earning income and by looking out to attract potential businesses, visitors and investors to the city” (7)</i></p>
	Funding	<p><i>“But obviously with the current economic climate, the money and funds are not going to be available in the same capacity, which was initially available.....” (1/2)</i></p> <p><i>“...well....the amount of money that came in, and that Liverpool had this year....will not be the same next year” (3)</i></p>
Collaborative efforts	Responsibility	<p><i>“Stakeholders and people who are driving this have their own targets and their objectives to achieve...however....their main responsibility should be maintaining the good image of Liverpool all round....” (11)</i></p>
	Leadership	<p><i>“But certainly it needs the city council or Liverpool vision or whatever the other stakeholders are: somebody and soon needs to take that lead” (9)</i></p>
	Commitment	<p><i>“The Mersey Partnership is committed to look into business development through inward investment in Liverpool alongside maintaining the tourism momentum ongoing, too” (7)</i></p>
	Mutual coordination	<p><i>“We also involved our partners such as TMP, County Council and any others who have invested interest in making it become a successful brand for this year and they were</i></p>

		<i>all involved in the process” (1/2)</i>
	<i>Involvement</i>	<i>“What has happened in the mean time is that the act of bidding has actually brought people together: People said: ‘we want to win this’....‘we can do this.... yes, we will definitely do this” (5)</i>
	<i>Support</i>	<i>“....we also want to ensure that where there is wealth in the city...that actually will support businesses and other prospective entrepreneurs” (10)</i> <i>“What they actually did was helped people to apply for jobs, they helped people to get work....because it is not just the case of coming and applying for the job, this is about effectively filling up the form” (5)</i>
	<i>Training</i>	<i>“...its training people through the whole procedure and that is what we were able to do” (5)</i>
Interventions	<i>Continuous progress</i>	<i>“Therefore producing new and creative branding strategies, external perception development, sense of continuous progress and a sense of change is very important” (7)</i> <i>“Now that is what sustainability is about! Maintaining the momentum, we need to keep going forward and if we keep going forward” (10)</i>
	<i>Vision</i>	<i>“But what we want going forward is ‘one brand’ for the city that can be tailored with all the various stakeholders using a form of it” (1/2)</i> <i>“....we have to move beyond that small parochial thinking and draw out unambiguous objectives; otherwise we will never generate wealth.....and never raise people’s aspirations and living standards across this place or city region” (11)</i>
	<i>Skills development</i>	<i>“to try and produce such skills in people who can take full advantage of those opportunities and I think that is one of the most important aspects of the planning</i>

		<i>stages of the recovery from these current difficult times, for me..." (11)</i>
	<i>Effective planning</i>	<i>Oh' of course, there is a longer term plan which has been there since this all started.....since we started in 90s towards all these for the redevelopment of the city, preparing for the bid to the ECoC title, to the point where the bid was being awarded" (4)</i>
	<i>Research</i>	<i>"We undertake some work called 'Annual Image Tracking survey' where we particularly look round at investments in terms of the investment attractiveness of the city region to an investment audience....so just differentiating between the different audiences that are out there and our corporate audiences, particularly" (11)</i>
	<i>Rational</i>	<i>"It's more about value proposition and it's more towards the rational aspect now: have you got the leading professors, leading academics, in that field that have done research....and is there the talent around? It's going to be really interesting to that business....could be a driver, they are very knowledge-based research and development areas" (11)</i>
	<i>Promotions & advertisement</i>	<i>"....number of large events and big conferences taking place in Liverpool brings in huge amounts of external PR" (7)</i> <i>"....the £200m of media exposure that we have got as a result of that, you just don't throw it away, rather you work around it, evolve it, with it and you develop it" (12)</i>
	<i>Revitalisation</i>	<i>"this is a world-renown place, with a new identity and revitalised image.... that has really picked itself up and is now fantastic place to visit...and has actually brought people in from all over the world" (11)</i>
	<i>Business opportunities</i>	<i>"...there are the value propositions now available here.... which can enhance business opportunities..." (6)</i>

The next sub-section discusses a range of concepts identified from the research interviews, which are perceived to enhance sustainability from a place brand development and management perspective.

The following Figure (7.8.2), Table (7.8.2) and subsequent discussion are derived from coding and modelling the participant responses via NVivo.

Figure 7.8.2: Sustainable growth

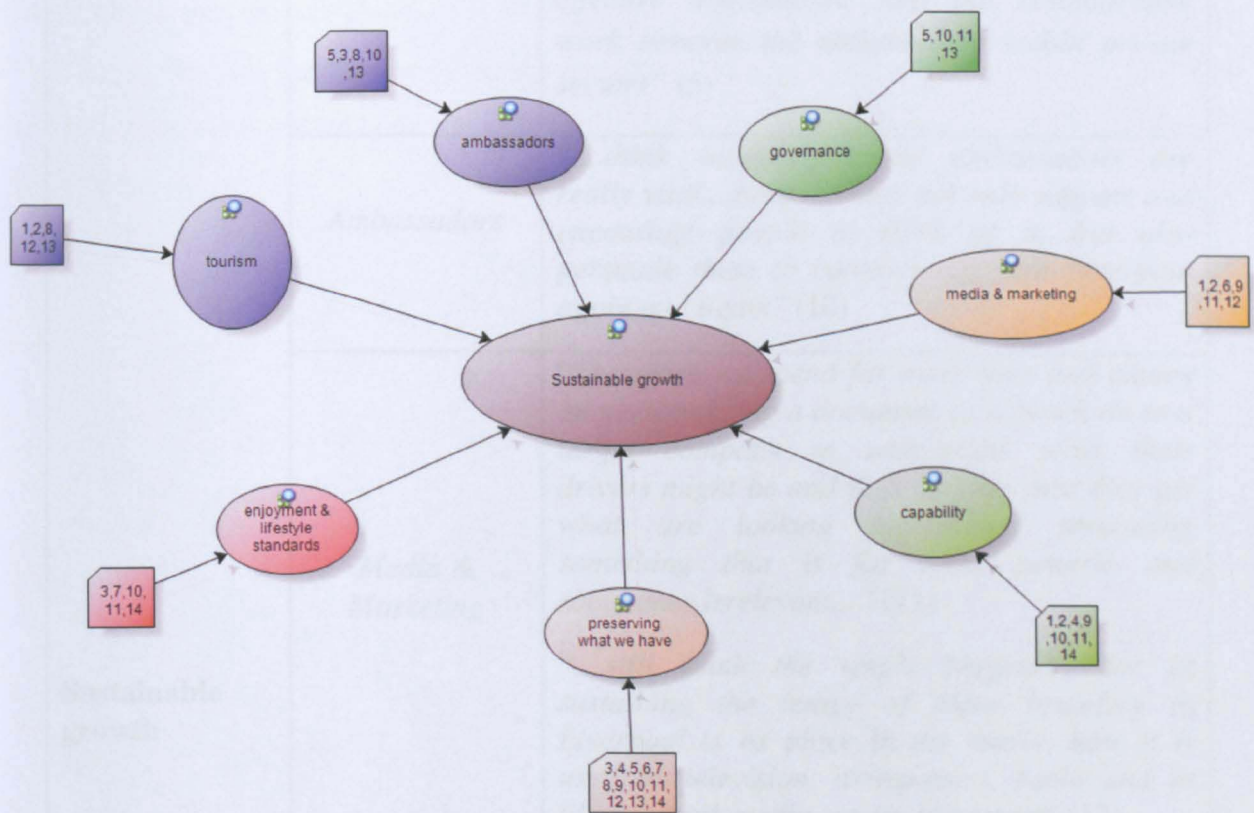


Figure 7.8.2 shows what factors are important for sustainable growth

With reference to the figure (7.8.2) above, concepts such as **preserving current assets**, **capability** to satisfy diverse needs; **effective media planning** and **strategic marketing** emerge to be the important elements comprising the ‘Sustainable growth’ category. However, other concepts such attractive **tourism** provision, intelligent and responsive **governance**, improved **lifestyle** standards and livelihood, and increasing numbers of **ambassadors** in the form of loyal citizens and visitors (both leisure and business) also contributes to the sustainable growth of a place.

The following Table (7.8.2) shows the example of text references coded from the interviews in order to derive the 'sustainable growth' category.

Table 7.8.2: Sustainable growth category

Research category	Example of coded text reference (<i>research participant</i>)	
Sustainable growth	<i>Governance</i>	<i>“so there are two key aspects to it: the role of governance in continuous funding and its effective distribution; and the collaborative work between the stakeholders within private sectors” (5)</i>
	<i>Ambassadors</i>	<i>“....think voluntary brand ambassadors are really vital....because they not only support and encourage people to think of it....but also persuade them to continuously visit Liverpool again and again” (10)</i>
	<i>Media & Marketing</i>	<i>“Therefore we spend far more time and money on personalising a document or a brochure to a target company to understand what their drivers might be and thus making sure they get what are looking for rather producing something that is far more generic and sometimes irrelevant...” (11)</i> <i>“....still think the single biggest factor in sustaining the image of place branding in Liverpool is its place in the media, how it is used by television, newspapers, radio and in films. I think media is very important” (13)</i>
	<i>Capability</i>	<i>“This is a city that has a scope to become one of the top 10 global cities. Although, we do have some realistic obstacles in our way but we are not constrained that we are capable of being as powerful, more powerful in long term of any cities in this country, apart from London” (11)</i>
	<i>Preserving what we have</i>	<i>“So to be knocking at the world’s stage, continuously, it is important to keep spending the money where your reputation is trickiest! To count on that- it is important to capitalise on those areas where reputation is positive, so you are ‘pushing the open door really” (6)</i>
	<i>Enjoyment &</i>	<i>“...people would stay here and thousands more</i>

	<i>Lifestyle standards</i>	<i>would stay here if the opportunities were here with the quality of improved life spectrum and plenty of excitement around... ” (11)</i>
	<i>Tourism</i>	<i>“People consider it as a short-break destination, a business tourism destination” (1/2)</i>

The following chapter focuses on the detailed discussions of the key findings that have been identified in this chapter and further presents the development of an overarching framework that highlights the key facets of place branding, their role and significance in a place’s development and finally the relationship between place branding and sustainable development.

Chapter 8 Discussion

This chapter discusses some of the important relationships that have emerged between the different constructs of place branding through the interactive modelling techniques, applied within this project.

The discussion of the findings will follow the format below:

- Section 8.1 discusses the **role of place branding** from the prospect of regeneration, business development, asset optimisation, brand image development and extension through positive media propagation **and its relationship to the sustainable development;**
- Section 8.2 aims to establish **the inter-relationship between the range of stakeholders** differentiated into two categories – ‘*Creators*’ and ‘*Drivers*’ and their role in place branding process;
- Section 8.3 **discusses the role of mega event** such ‘ECoC’08’ in terms of place brand perceptions established through a number of key brand attributes;
- Section 8.4 discusses the importance of **maintaining the momentum of progress** by considering the key aspects of collaborative stakeholder effort, purposeful interventions and overcoming challenges and issues. Furthermore, other factors such as strategic marketing, preserving the assets and developing brand ambassadors are also discussed in order to understand their role in to sustainable development;
- Section 8.5 and 8.6 presents a detailed analysis of **the importance of sustainable growth for the continuous development** and delivers a framework that demonstrates a ‘continuous cyclic relationship’ between place branding and sustainable development.

8.1 Importance of place branding

In relation to the component concepts of place branding that have been established earlier (figure 7.5), the figure (8.1) below depicts the relationship between place branding (and its associated concepts) and sustainable development.

In context to sustainable development, Place Branding is perceived to be associated with **preserving assets, regenerating the infrastructure and developing businesses** as well as **optimising assets** to underpin place brand image. Place branding is then seen to associate with 'maintaining progress', to deliver sustainable development.

Figure 8.1: Importance of place branding and its relationship with sustainable development

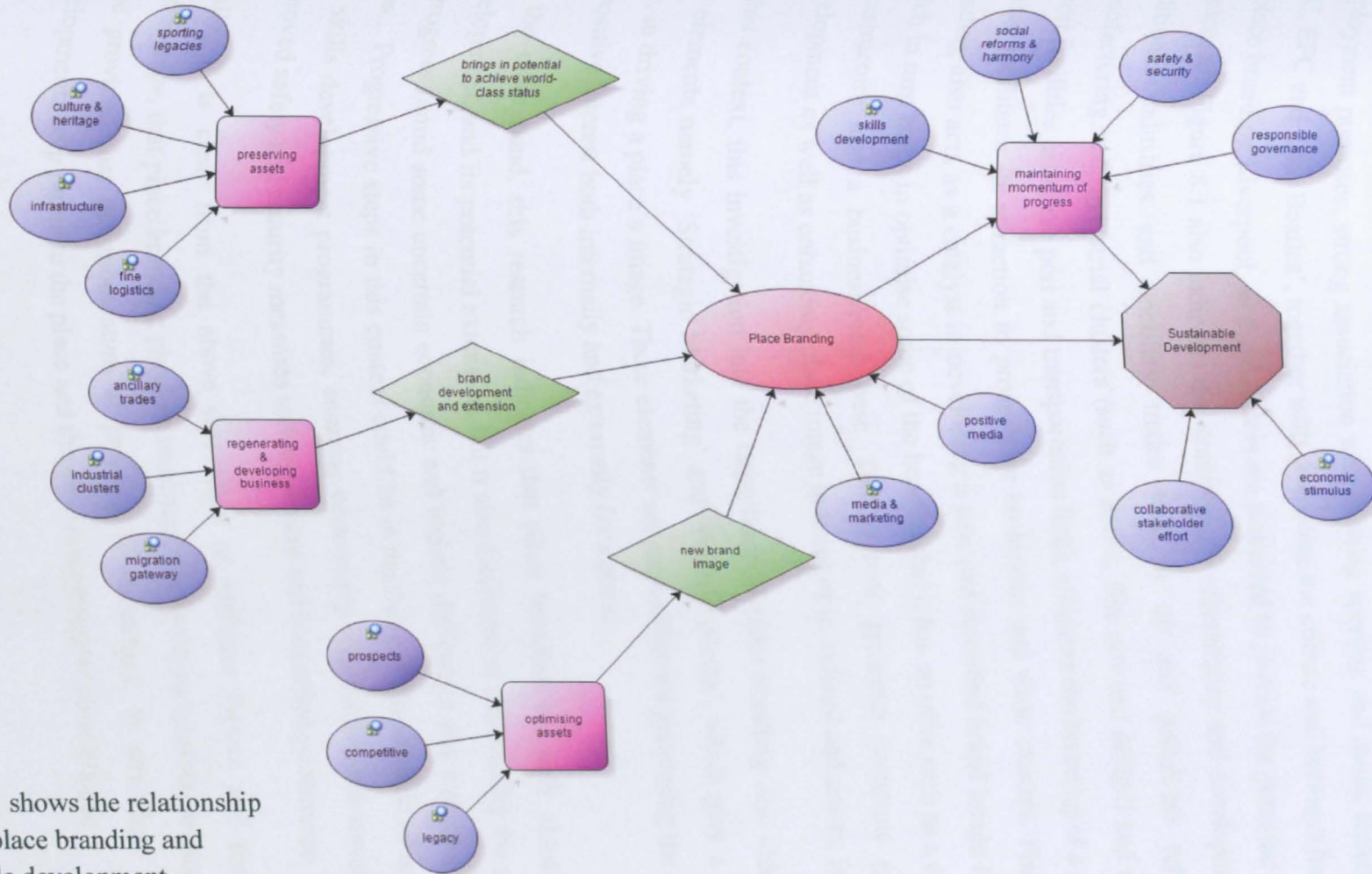
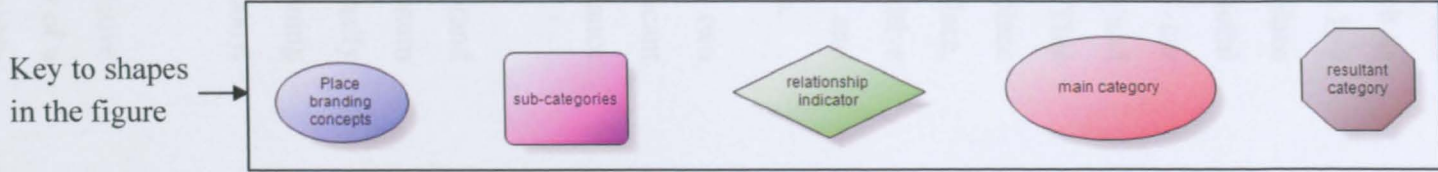


Figure 8.1 shows the relationship between place branding and sustainable development



Respondents perceive that careful preservation of place-embedded assets (such as easily accessible facilities and good local amenities, better infrastructure for business and employment purposes, strong association with existing sporting and music legacies such as LFC, EFC and 'The Beatles', together with promoting the culture and heritage) has been key in place branding Liverpool, as these factors are perceived to provide the potential for a place to succeed. Figure 8.1 also indicates that continuously regenerating and developing the local traditional industries and ancillary trades such as oil and petroleum refining, car manufacturing, etc, industrial clusters (such as music, fine arts and design) and import and export facilities using the port and transportation links, enhances the branding of a place. This further facilitates its attraction to prospective businesses and trade clusters. Finally, place branding also acts as a catalyst in developing a new and refreshed brand image for a place, which in turn helps to optimise some of the benefits that it has on offer such as a competitive infrastructure and a business/retail base. This in turn, promotes economic growth and development as well as enhancing place image in terms of its cultural and artistic legacies.

In this context, this investigation into the importance of place branding also identified two key elements namely 'Strategic Marketing' and 'Positive Media', which play a significant role, in driving a place's image. These elements are responsible for generating the abundance of positive interest both internally and externally for a place.

On the other hand, this research indicates that place branding not only assists in brand development, and its potential extension, but it also facilitates in maintaining the momentum of progress (amid some uncertain economic and logistic difficulties that a place occasionally faces... Progressive steps in this context could be in the form of introduction of new training and skills development programmes, ensuring community reformation and social harmony, improved safety and security measures and responsive and committed governance.

Finally, it is clear from the above discussion of different factors and their relative relationships, that place branding plays an important role in the sustainable development of a place provided that the momentum of progress is maintained. In turn these sustainable developments help promote the place and thereby create stronger place brands.

8.2 Inter-relations of the key stakeholders and their role in place branding

The segments differentiating the roles of the different Brand Creators and Drivers were established using relationship-modelling and were presented earlier in Figure (7.2).

The figure below (8.2) indicates an interesting relationship of cooperation and association between a range of stakeholders identified as 'Brand Creators' and 'Brand Drivers' depending on their role and involvement in the place branding process. The left half of the figure (8.2) lists a range of stakeholders who are perceived to be responsible for developing and shaping the place brand (and are therefore termed 'Brand Creators'). These stakeholders are further differentiated into two categorical segments, as Initiators (Segment A) and Shapers (Segment B), depending upon their role, as understood by the respondents.

The right hand side of the figure lists the brand creators (those stakeholders who are responsible for pushing the place brand), and the figure shows how these two groups interact to enhance brand exposure and ensure brand extension in promoting place brand image and brand developments.

Figure 8.2: relationship model showing role of stakeholders in place branding

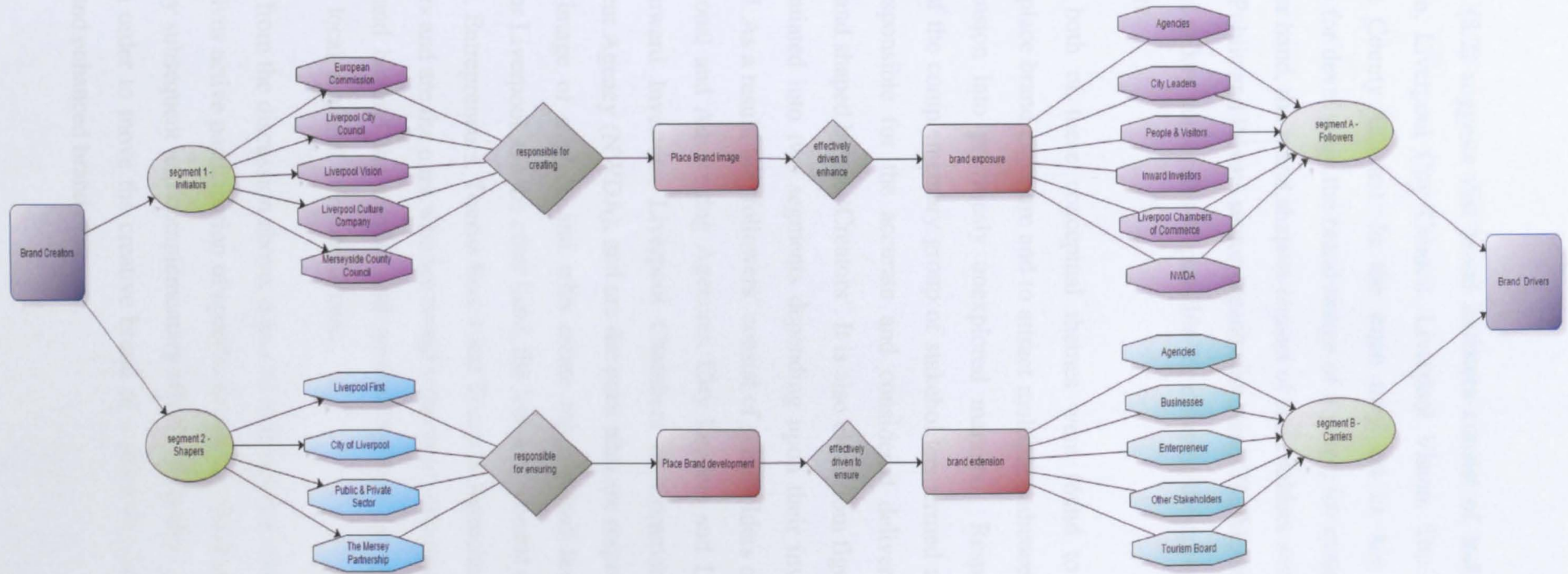
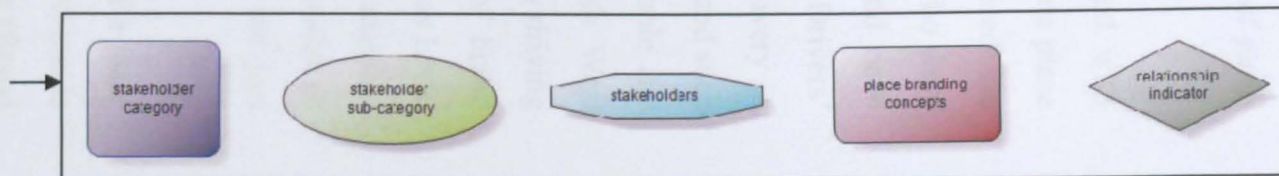


Figure 8.2 shows the role of individual stakeholders in branding a place

Key to shapes in the figure



The figure (8.2) suggests that brand initiators consist of stakeholders such as European Commission, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool Vision, The Culture Company and The Merseyside County Council. In the main they act as key authorities and regulators responsible for developing the brand image of a place, for example Liverpool in this study. On the other hand, the brand shapers consist of stakeholders such as Liverpool First, City of Liverpool, Public and Private sector organisations and The Mersey Partnership and their main role is to act as key authorities responsible for ensuring the appropriate development of place brand stature.

Moreover, both of these conceptual themes were found to be highly associated with enhancing place brand exposure and to attract multiple audiences, ensuring appropriate place brand extension into previously unexplored markets. Respondents also suggested the evolution of the complementary group of stakeholders termed as 'Brand Drivers' who were actually responsible for the accurate and considered delivery of the place brand once developed and shaped by the 'Creators'. It is also clear from figure (8.2) that 'Brand Drivers' are differentiated into two segments depending upon their involvement in the delivery of place brand. As a result, the 'followers' consist of stakeholders of Liverpool place brand such as Promotional and Advertising Agencies, City Leaders and Local Politicians, People and Visitors, Inward Investors, Liverpool Chambers of Commerce (LCC) and North West Development Agency (NWDA), and are the ones who are responsible for effectively driving the brand image of a place and who create the required level and/or amount of brand exposure for Liverpool. On the other hand, the 'carriers' consist of stakeholders such as Local Businesses, Entrepreneurs, Tourist Board and Tourism Agencies and other local and regional stakeholders and are the ones who are found to be most effective in ensuring the extension of a place brand beyond the regular and general markets i.e. global exposure and not just continuous local, regional or national focus.

Therefore, from the discussion above, it can be seen that the creation or re-shaping of a place brand involves active participation of specific groups of stakeholders (Brand Creators) and is followed by subsequent and complementary efforts of another group of stakeholders (Brand Drivers) in order to move the creative brand of a place forward through appropriate brand extension and enhanced brand exposure.

8.3 Inter-relationships between place branding, a mega-event (ECoC'08) and sustainable growth

The role of place branding in developing positive attributes in terms of both tangible and intangible facets of a place and its importance in further assisting sustainability of growth and development was established. Furthermore, this section shows the role of a major event (ECoC) and its relationship with sustainable growth in Figure (8.3).

Figure 8.3: Place branding – Attributes – Sustainable growth relationship model

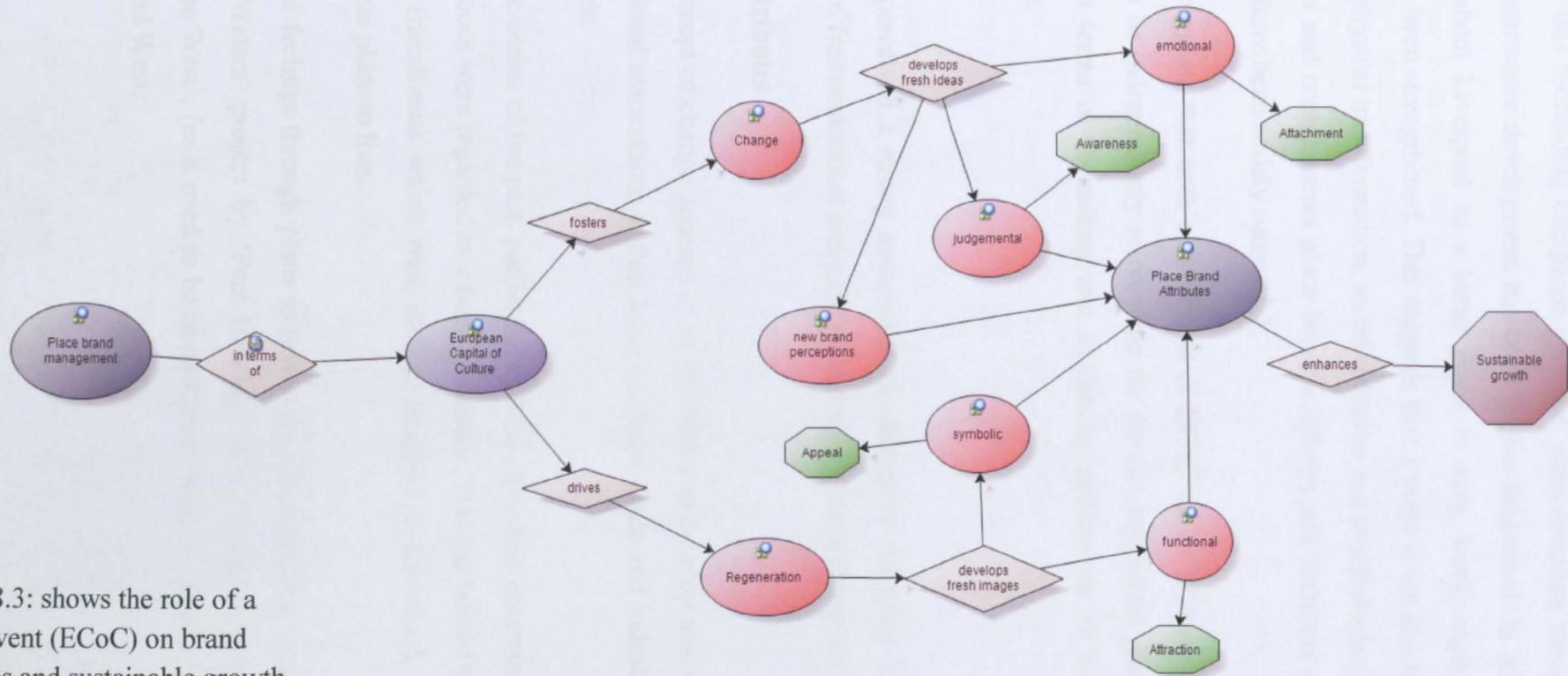
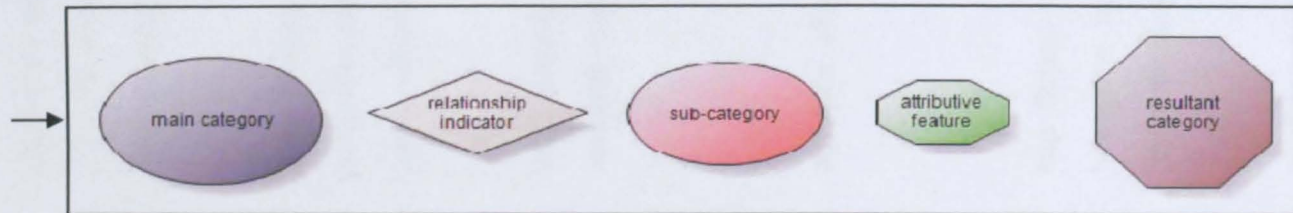


Figure 8.3: shows the role of a major event (ECoC) on brand attributes and sustainable growth

Key to shapes in the figure



The Figure (8.3) shows that an important facet in the branding of Liverpool was ECoc'08 and as a result of this rebranding campaign, physical transformation through regeneration and extensive infrastructure development has been further facilitated. In addition, psychological perspectives about Liverpool as a better place to visit, work, explore and consider for relocation has been strengthened. This suggests that a mega event (such as ECoC) can act as a catalyst for physical transformation, social cohesion and psychological well-being, which in turn, improves and complements place brand attributes and therefore place brand image is considered to have been widely successful:

Figure (8.3) suggests that both components of ECoC'08 i.e. 'Change' and 'Regeneration' were found to be independently responsible for developing certain place-specific attributes, particularly in terms of formatting and evaluating perceptions of Liverpool, during this research study.

1) Change

Respondents perceived a strong association of **change** in the place brand image with the development of fresh emotional and judgemental attributes as discussed below:

Emotional attributes

Part of the concept of change appears to be the ability to develop new ideas and to generate positive emotional associations within local residents, trade and industry; and tourists. This may be through:

a) Eliciting memories of the past, particularly of the close-knit communities where everyone in neighbourhoods were regarded as a family member. This has helped rejuvenated aspects of harmony and friendliness which were closely attached to Liverpool, and promote it once more, as a better place to live.

b) Aspirational feelings through plans to revive the 'Transatlantic' trades, by implementing the 'Mersey Waters' project by 'Peel Holdings PLC.,' making Liverpool once more, a 'gateway to the West', (as it used to be in past times with its 'buzzing' port and sea-trades) linking East and West.

c) Feelings of pride in the city with its outstanding cultural, heritage and architectural legacies (such as ‘The Beatles Story’, ‘The World & The Maritime Museums’, magnificent water fronts, wonderful night life, impressive artistic portfolio).

d) An emotional association with Liverpool as a cosmopolitan city, not only housing the oldest Chinese community in Europe but, through its sea-trade heritage, it has nationals originating from across the globe dwelling in.

e) Linking to the emotions of its sporting legacies, particularly Liverpool Football Club and Everton Football Club, which have a massive fan-base world-wide. The following exemplifies the point, demonstrating this emotional association of Liverpool, globally:

“Also, I would say the further away you go from Liverpool, the better regarded it is! So people in China and India, for example, think more of Liverpool than people in Basingstoke and Manchester do” (6)

Judgemental attributes

Respondents also reported that ‘Change’ via ‘ECoC’08’ and the specific efforts of place branding had been largely successful in generating positive judgemental perceptions of Liverpool, particularly in terms of overcoming past negative images of conflicts, deprivation and socio-economic decline. Respondents also suggest that the recent place branding drive has helped overturn the perceptions of ‘reluctance’ and ‘avoidance’ of Liverpool (due to deeply engraved, negative images of the past) into prospects of new beginning and a curiosity to explore its new image, within wider audiences both internally and externally. In this case, ‘Liverpool’s current image is seen as an exciting place to visit, work and live’.

The following is an extract from one of the participant’s interview transcript that shows these newly formatted judgmental attributes of Liverpool:

“I think it helped raise the profile, so maybe, some people who hadn’t thought of coming to Liverpool – this campaign has made them think – oh!.....There is something happening there....let’s go and visit the place” (9)

New brand perceptions

‘Change’ due to ECoC’08 has also helped refresh the general image of Liverpool by overturning negative association of dislike and decline, and helped create a brand new

identity as a place that is full of opportunities and excitement, modernised infrastructure and residential facilities, magnificent arts, architecture and an interesting culture and heritage, and as importantly, a place that is now one of the leading cities in the UK in terms of safety and security for both the public and businesses.

The following is an extract from one of the participant's interview transcript that shows the newly developed general attributes of Liverpool:

“So that means that people want to be here, and when they come, having them so surprised that they want to come back” (5)

2) Regeneration

In addition to 'Change', ECoC'08 has also helped stimulate regeneration that has further enhanced symbolic and functional attributes as discussed below.

Symbolic attributes

From figure (8.3), it can be seen that 'Regeneration' via 'ECoC'08' has generated positive symbolic associations in terms of creating lasting images in the minds of visitors (who might be in Liverpool for business, tourism or leisure purposes), demonstrating its capacity for satisfying a wider audience, whilst implementing improved measures of safety and security, and by good governance in overcoming past images of a place with high crime rates and high levels of social deprivation. This has also helped in re-positioning a new and positive image for the media and has resulted in the promotion of Liverpool as a safer, modernised and progressive city with good-quality lifestyle. According to some respondents the regeneration has made Liverpool one of the most favourable places considered as a short-break destination in the UK.

The following is an extract from one of the participant's interview transcript that shows the newly developed symbolic attributes of Liverpool:

“.....and the response of the people at these events was unbelievable, they were mind-blown by Liverpool.....they just couldn't believe the 'impact nature' and the 'diverse nature' of the attractions in Liverpool” (3)

Functional attributes

According to the interviews, regeneration has also been successful in developing the functional associations of Liverpool as an exciting place. Participants spoke of the development of the contemporary facilities (for example, the new Arena and Convention Centre to host national and international level conferences, and the new Liner Terminal, attracting 'Transatlantic' cruises), and an improved infrastructure providing better transportation facilities within the city itself and expansion of the Liverpool John Lennon airport, attracting international airline companies such as KLM, as well as improved motorway networks into and out of the city, which has made Liverpool, as a place, more accessible and less congested. Further to this, the provision of skills development and customised training, and the increasing employment opportunities and better housing conditions, have helped attract new businesses, and aspirant entrepreneurs and as well as local residents. These functional improvements in Liverpool have also given an excellent opportunity to the local council and other stakeholders to match the facilities to the 'needs' and 'wants' of potential customers, may they be, tourists, potential investors, new businesses, or skilled migrants. It has also brought a general sense of 'optimism' and 'self-belief' in the place.

The following is an extract from one of the interview transcripts that supports the perceived symbolic attributes of Liverpool:

“You look at New York and Paris and somewhere like Sydney, Shanghai.....you look at cities like that....not only you have instant recognisability, they also have something extra about them....I put Liverpool in that class” (5)

Finally, figure 8.3 shows that together all the attributes developed as a result of place branding in the case of Liverpool, play a role in enhancing sustainable growth, by ensuring continuous development in infrastructure, close associations with history, culture and heritage, efforts to overcome negative images and further improvements in lifestyle standards, skills and training provision.

8.4 Maintaining momentum and sustainable development

According to findings discussed in the section 7.4 of Chapter 7, a place branding drive using a major event or a specific campaign (such as ECoC'08 in case of Liverpool) may result in substantial development of infrastructure and other facilities, which in turn could lead to general sustainability in terms of future growth prospects, if these developments are given proper consideration, and are appropriately maintained on a continuous basis.

However, a specific theme has been identified during this study of the relationships between the range related concepts and categories established via the interviews and are termed 'Maintaining Momentum' to achieve sustainable development in a place. Figure 8.4, below displays the relationship between 'Momentum momentum' and 'Sustainable development of a place'.

Figure 8.4: Maintaining Momentum – Sustainable growth relationship model

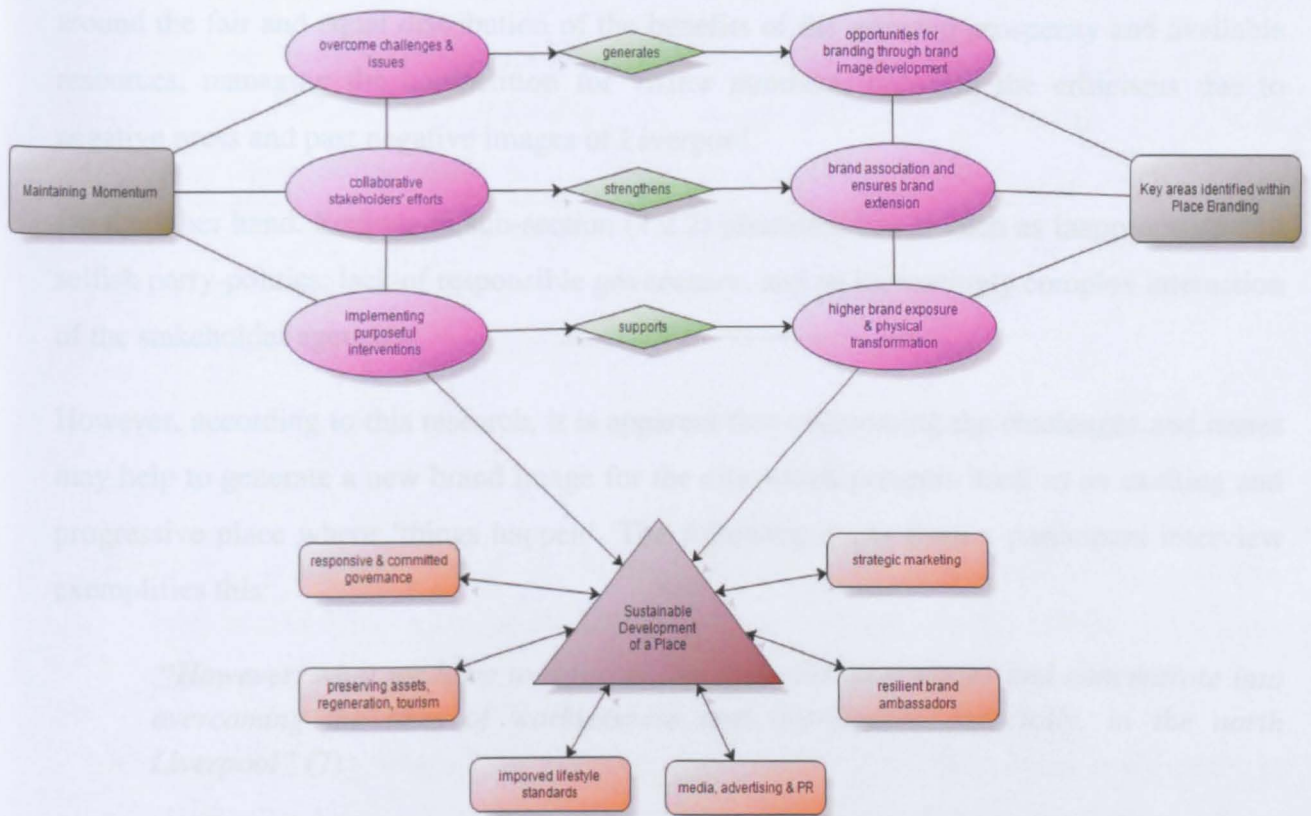
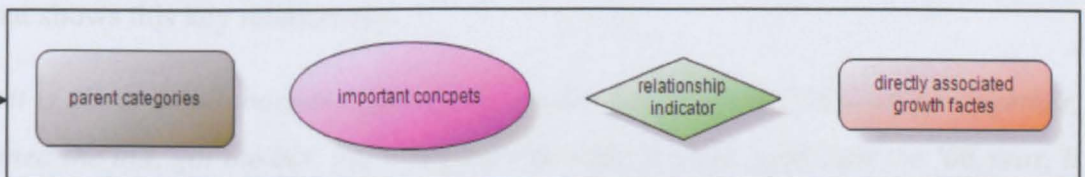


Figure 8.4 shows relationship between maintaining momentum and sustainable growth

Key to shapes in the figure



The above figure shows the emergence of three categories under the over-arching facet of ‘Maintaining the momentum’ namely: **Overcoming challenges & issues**, **Collaborative stakeholder efforts** and **Implementing purposeful interventions**. Each of these categories is important in enhancing specific areas of place branding which leads to sustainable development and are discussed below.

Overcoming challenges and issues

The findings in the previous sub-section (7.4.2) suggest that a number of concepts relate to 'overcoming challenges and issues'. These include responses relating to resolving issues around the fair and equal distribution of the benefits of the growing prosperity and available resources, managing the competition for visitor numbers, reducing the criticisms due to negative press and past negative images of Liverpool.

On the other hand, findings in sub-section (7.2.2) identified issues such as inappropriate and selfish party-politics, lack of responsible governance, and an increasingly complex interaction of the stakeholder agencies.

However, according to this research, it is apparent that overcoming the challenges and issues may help to generate a new brand image for the city which presents itself as an exciting and progressive place where 'things happen'. The following quote from a participant interview exemplifies this:

"However, what we have to do is to look into our weaknesses and concentrate into overcoming the likes of worklessness and deprivation, especially, in the north Liverpool" (7)

Collaborative stakeholder efforts

The figure (8.4) clearly shows the importance of collaborative efforts from stakeholders. Their interaction could succeed in forging stronger and lasting relationship development and ensuring place brand extension to a wider market and multiple target audiences, both internally and globally. The following extract from one of the research participant's interview transcript that shows this key relationship:

"So it is about a collaborative effort, like we did for the ECoC'08 – we got together, planned the bid, got the bid, put it together to make it work...and then the '08 year, it was like everyone was looking forward to make it work" (9)

Implementing purposeful interventions

The figure (8.4) also demonstrates the effectiveness of underlying interventions in terms of planning and development, which could strengthen optimised brand exposure for a place like Liverpool, attempting to re-position its brand image, via sustainable physical transformation of its infrastructure. The following extract from one of the research participant's interview transcript that shows this key relationship:

“In terms of maintaining the physical and economic change – we have broad business centred strategies in place that cover aspects of expanding knowledge within the economy” (7)

This discussion recognises the importance of three categories shown on left half of figure (8.4) linked to ‘Maintaining Momentum’ and its relationship in determining the relative associations shown in the right half of figure (such as brand image development, positive brand association and brand extension and optimised brand exposure). This indeed makes logical sense in that maintaining the momentum of progress is likely to facilitate place branding which in turn promotes sustainable development of a place.

A number of other factors were identified as being important in sustainable development. These include:

- timely planned and strategically implemented marketing tactics such as target-specific branding to attract niche audiences for events, such as cultural festivals or business conferences or conventions;
- creating lasting images for visitors, and generating self-belief and civic pride in residents and businesses which generates committed and resilient brand ambassadors;
- positive media images through continuous promotion and media displaying the full range of offerings satisfying wider audiences;
- providing ample amenities and facilities, in terms of leisure and entertainment, and improved lifestyle standards to avoid emigration and attract a highly skilled population;
- preserving assets which promote the culture, heritage, tradition and values of the place; and
- Committed governance providing consistent responsive and strategic direction.

The research suggests that these concepts also make a substantial contribution to sustainable and future prosperity. Therefore, sustainability appears to require this dual and complementary approach.

8.5 Importance of sustainable development

If the starting premise is that there has been little research into place branding (see Chapter Four), then there has been almost no previous research relating place branding to sustainable development. This study demonstrates the link and shows that sustainability is dependent on a range of integrated developments relating to good governance, asset management, physical and social regeneration as well as proactive brand management.

The Figure (8.5) below displays model showing this relationship:

Figure 8.5: Importance of sustainable growth

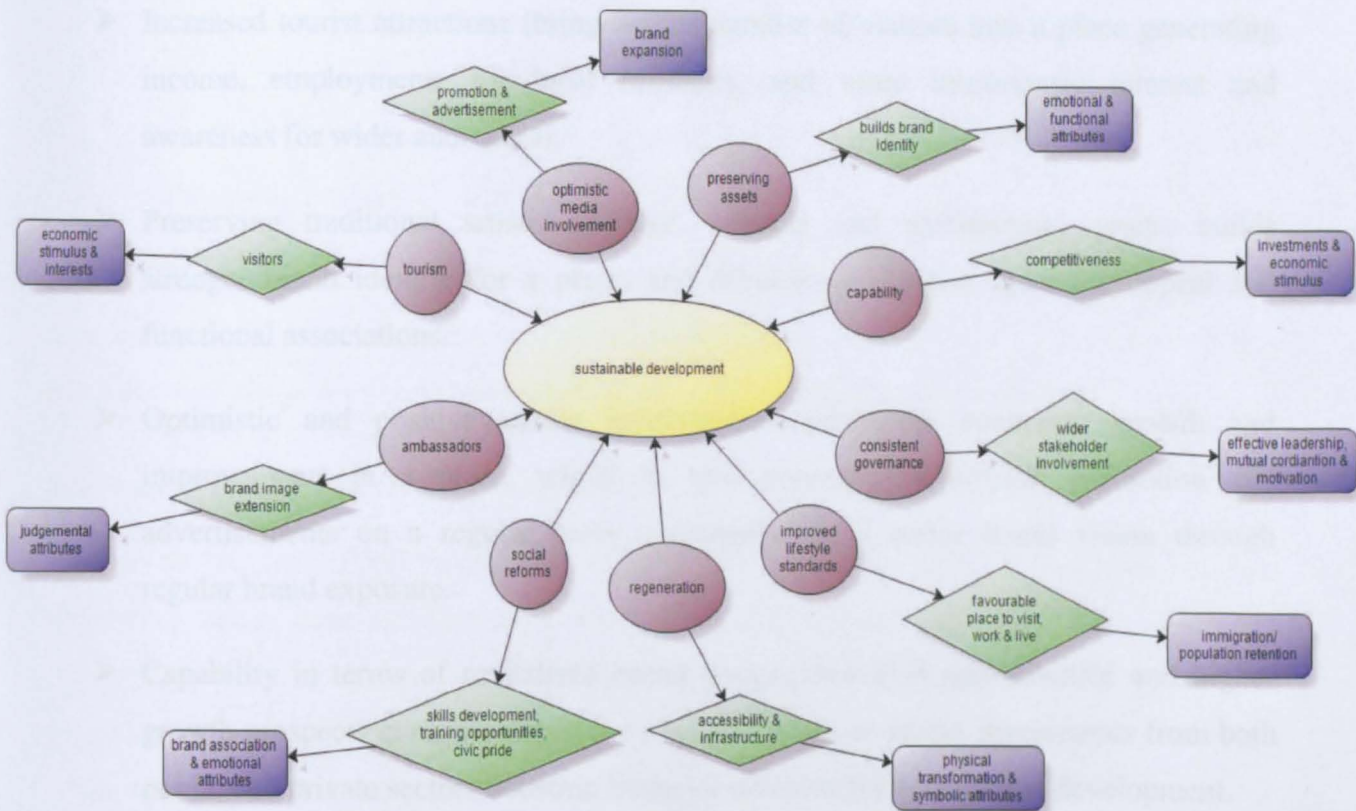
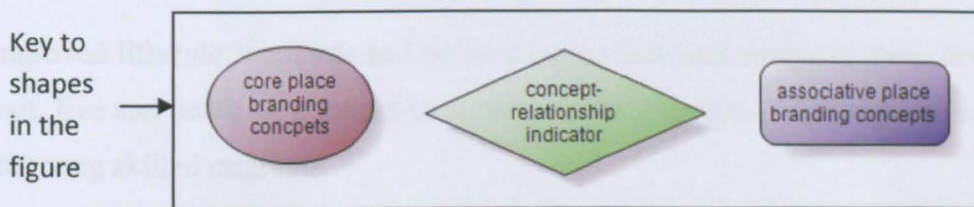


Figure 8.5 shows facets for sustainable development



The figure above (8.5) shows a number of concepts contributing to the sustainable development which include increased tourism provision, preservation of traditionally inherited assets, positive media involvement (demonstrating capability to attract wider audiences globally), responsive and consistent governance, improved lifestyle standards, continuous infrastructural developments (via the regeneration drive, improved socio-economic outputs and support for increased place brand loyalty). Furthermore, the research

has found that each of these concepts contributes substantially to promoting the growth prospects for a place as discussed below.

- Increased tourist attractions (bring higher number of visitors into a place generating income, employments for local residents, and more importantly interest and awareness for wider audiences).
- Preserving traditional artistic heritage, cultural and architectural assets, builds stronger brand identity for a place, and develops a positive symbolic appeal and functional associations.
- Optimistic and positive media involvement confirming economic growth and improvements in a place, which in turn generates significant promotion and advertisements on a regular basis communicating a wider brand vision through regular brand exposure.
- Capability in terms of revitalised brand image, increased opportunities and higher growth prospects gives a competitive edge to a place to attract investments from both public and private sectors boosting financial stimulus for economical development.
- Consistent and responsive governance assists broader stakeholder involvement in terms of skills development and training provisions with effective leadership and mutual coordination.
- Improved lifestyle standards and better housing facilities makes a place favourable to visit, live and settle on a longer term, recuperating retention of graduates and further attracting skilled migrants.
- The continuous regeneration drive facilitates further improvement to the infrastructure of a place providing better accessibility in terms of improved transportation links, high-tech and contemporary business facilities attracting national and international events and exhibitions, business conventions and corporate conferences, all contributing to local economy.
- Societal and community regeneration by implementing a range of reforms in terms of better skills development and training programmes, motivational entrepreneurship, confidence building and increasing opportunities for local residents, encourages civic

pride within a place. This in turn, provides significant brand association and brand loyalty through stronger emotional attributes of a place.

- Finally, attempts to increase place brand loyalty by creating a cohort of public ambassadors for a place, which in turn generates an abundance of viral marketing via 'word of mouth' and feedback, pushing brand image and brand extension, and subsequently changes judgemental perceptions.

The findings discussed above suggests significant importance of maintaining sustainability in terms of growth and development in a place in order to make its mark on a competitive global platform with a new and exclusive brand image and substantial positive attributes.

8.6 Place branding and its long-term impact on sustainable development

Further to the identification of some significantly important themes (discussed so far) enhancing better understanding of a number of place-brand related concepts and their importance, this research has also identified some of the possible interrelationships between place branding and its impact on long-term sustainable development. This inter-relationship is shown in figure (8.6) below:

Figure 8.6.: Place branding – Sustainable growth interrelationship model

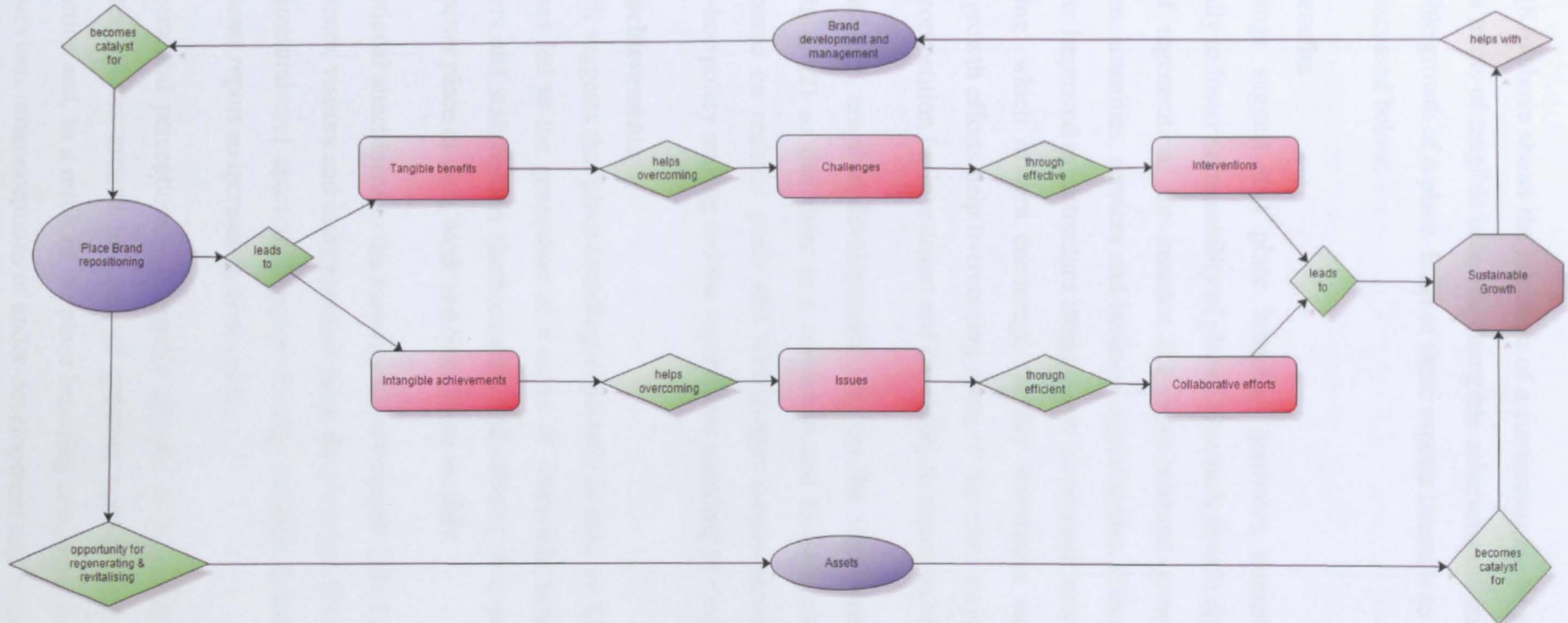
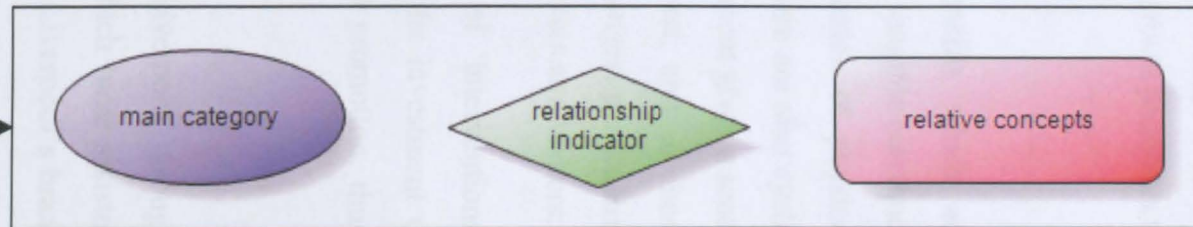


Figure 8.6 shows the cyclic relationship between place branding and sustainable growth

Key to shapes in the figure



The figure (8.6) above shows the initiation of a continuous cyclic relationship between place branding (in terms of tangible benefits, intangible achievements and asset-development) and the sustainable growth of a place. Each of these aspects interacts to bring growth prospects to a place as discussed below:

Tangible benefits

These findings suggest that place branding generates numerous benefits which act synergistically to foster sustainability of places. One such benefit relates to tangible outcomes in terms of regeneration, for instance the unprecedented growth in terms of physical infrastructure, amenities, services and business opportunities. However, there are also cyclic benefits here: improved infrastructure attracts new investment: new investment gives a sense of 'happening' which in turn encourages further investment and interest, and so these continuous growth efforts help overcoming some of the other major challenges, particularly the intense competition for investment and the ability to attract more businesses and visitors.

Furthermore, such tangible developments rely on the implementation of 'interventions' (discussed in 7.4.2) so that there is a consistent and focused plan for the investment of resources, based on realistic goals and with proper communication and promotion, thus, avoiding ad-hoc policy making and the superfluous spending of funds.

Intangible achievements

This research suggests that place branding, especially in case of 'City of Liverpool' through ECoC'08, has led to the generation of a series of intangible benefits which have assisted policy makers and stakeholders (both creators and drivers) to re-position Liverpool's brand image as a better place to visit, work and live. These include:

- Emotional attachments – the majority of participants talked of people (including local residents, visitors and immigrants) linking the place's culture, music, artistic heritage, architectural and sporting legacies directly to their feelings. The majority of the residents report an increase in civic pride.
- Judgemental perceptions – Liverpool appears to be considered as one of the most exciting places around in terms of growing opportunities and improved life style attraction and, as a result of the place branding campaign, this has eradicated many of the previous misconceptions of under-development and social deprivation.

- Symbolic appeal – almost all the participants talked about the magnificent waterfront overlooking the river Mersey, the renowned architecture – “*second only to London, you know*” (10), the World and Maritime Museums (*displaying the history of the slave trade and Titanic*), the Beatles story, presence of renowned galleries and theatres such as the Tate, the Philharmonic. This has helped refresh the brand image of the place.

In addition, the achievements in the form of new place image development and positive brand exposure also helps overcome some of the historical issues such as past images of a troubled history, deprivation, low growth prospects, political rivalry, economic decline and conflicts, communal disharmony and lack of responsible leadership by authorities.

It was also found that the intangible achievements of the Liverpool place brand have a relationship to aspects of ‘collaborative stakeholder efforts’ (discussed in 7.4.2), whereby the mutual coordination and committed leadership of multiple stakeholders has overcome some of the ingrained negative images of past.

Additionally, a third relationship found to emerge from the figure (8.6) above, is the direct association of place branding to the development of further opportunities for regeneration. This in turn results in increased financial support through regional, central and global funding, an increased proportion of resources available thereby boosting community development, and increasing business investments, which in turn provides employment opportunities. This focus on regeneration also helps support efforts in preserving and promoting the architectural and cultural heritage of a place, which in turn, is clearly important in attracting in higher numbers of visitors to a place.

These insights add new dimensions to the existing literature. It is the case (see Chapters 3 and 4) that there is a dearth of research that explores the place brand construct, particularly from the perspective of other cities who have either gained “European Capital of Culture” status or have undergone rebranding and repositioning exercises, (Hankinson, 2005; Anholt, 2007; Govers and Go, 2009). Furthermore, there has been no research to date into how place brands drive sustainable growth facets such as inward investment, business and employment opportunities, improving lifestyle standards, or positive media that promotes the local infrastructure, logistics, advanced facilities and true characteristics (The Mersey Economic Review, 2008). Moreover, Papadopolous, (2004) also pointed out that the available literature

(Anholt, 2002; Kotler, *et. al.* 1993; Hankinson, 2004 and Warnaby, *et. al.* 2002) suggests that the concept of place branding is at a critical stage, and in fact needs new research directions to be explored, to create new knowledge which would give better understanding to its applications and impacts.

To this point, the inter-relationships between key place-specific facets and their significance in the sustainable development has not been explored. Therefore, the findings of this research make a key contribution to the knowledge of place branding and its role in sustainability which is a major step forward in this field.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Project summary

The analysis and discussion of the research findings in Chapter 7 and 8, clearly shows that, this research has achieved its main aim of establishing the importance of place branding and its significance in sustainable development.

However, there are probably two major contributions of this research to the field of branding and, in particular, to Place Branding.

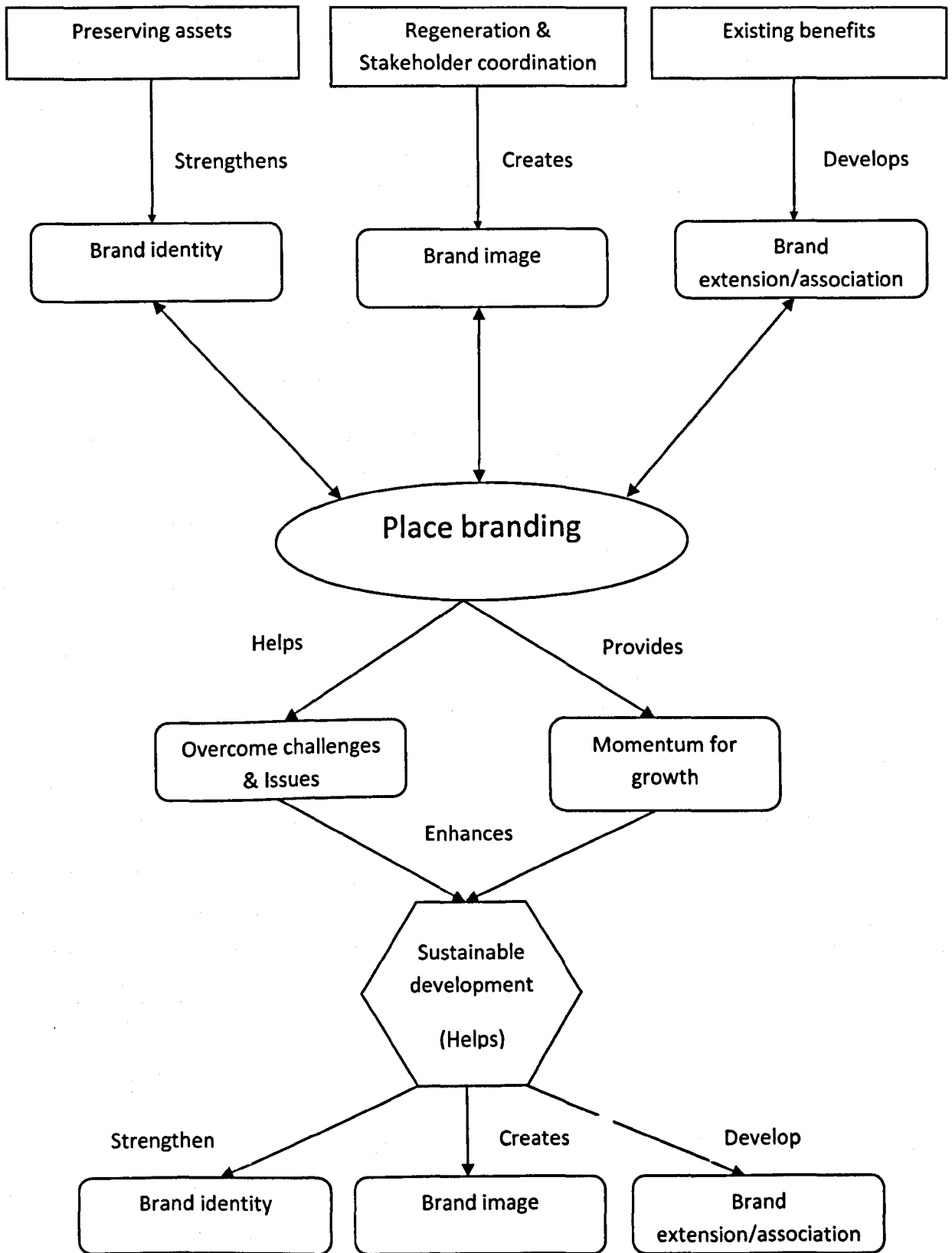
The first is the methodology: the inductive approach adopted for this study allowed an open, in-depth analysis of the complexities of place branding. However, it is the use of CAQDAS (NVivo) using double cycle coding analysis which is (to this point) unique and gives extremely valuable insights into the complex nature of place branding. This methodological approach is highly recommended for this type of study and therefore stands as an exemplar template for future analysis.

The second is the major contribution to place branding and is summarised in Figure 9.1 below.

9.2 Project summary framework

This research set out to explore the concept of place branding and its significance in the sustainable development of a place. The following figure (9.1) demonstrates an overall framework showing the significance of place branding in sustainable development.

Figure 9.1: place branding – sustainable development framework



The figure shows a number of key place-specific facets such as assets, regeneration, stakeholders and benefits identified during this study and their role in branding a place. In this context, the framework below further suggests that preserving existing assets strengthens the brand identity of a place and helps maintain the ongoing regeneration efforts, which together with stakeholder coordination and mutual cooperation, leads to the creation of a new brand image. This, together with improved infrastructure and other benefits (such as improved logistics and facilities) helps develop positive brand associations, understood both in terms of functional and symbolic attributes, which fosters brand loyalty and this in turn, provides a foundation for further brand extension.

All three of the above defined branding concepts: identity, image and associations work synergistically within the place branding constructs, helping to raise brand stature and reputation. At the same time, place branding practices help in a developing new brand image by overcoming place-specific issues and generating positive associations.

Place branding also supports the efforts in maintaining the momentum of progress by encouraging coordination between the multiple and diverse stakeholders, providing consistency and focus of the messages. In addition, place branding facilitates risk-reduction and brand resilience against any detrimental or damaging influences.

Place branding also creates positive images which bring with them more confidence, interest, and opportunities, which is crucial to the sustainable development of a place. This further helps in overcoming challenges of social deprivation, worklessness and crime. Residents feel motivated and satisfied, there is appropriate knowledge and skills development, high levels of employment and training opportunities, support and advice for new businesses and entrepreneurs, better housing conditions and modernised lifestyle standards, growing investments, funding and income resources, community development and a reduction of disharmony and associations with troubled history and crime related issues.

These factors converge and stimulate sustainable development. This has a cyclic effect: sustainable development adds to the existing benefits, combines the regenerative processes and compliments actions to preserve existing assets and so the cycle is complete and place brand stature will be raised.

9.3 Summary of results

This section presents a summary of the main results in following categorical framework that forms the basis of knowledge contribution from this research:

1) Understanding the theoretical concept of place branding, its evolution and development relation to the existing pool of destination branding and place marketing research:

This study investigated the existing literature on marketing of places (Chapter 3). It notes that place branding is an emerging field, evolving out of the literature (and the practice) of destination/tourism branding. Until very recently there had been little research into place branding, although the situation is changing and there is now much more academic interest developing.

Much of the literature relates to nation/country branding, destination branding and city branding and their corresponding models and processes. This study isolates place branding from this literature (Chapter 4) and sets clear boundaries for the subject. This study also identifies a number of constructs that characterise place branding and play an important role in its application.

Moreover, this research further reviews and integrates contemporary theory in discussing the need and significance of place branding.

2) Identification of key facets of place branding, their importance and interaction in the place brand construct:

This research acknowledges that place branding is multifaceted, and reviews a range of models that purport to identify these component parts. However, this research finds flaws in the current models and instead, identifies not only a number of new and important facets, but also the relative importance of these components and how they interact and relate to each other.

This research finds that these new facets help to develop a strong and powerful brand identity, positive brand image and further play a crucial role in extending a place's brand awareness.

3) Development of an interactive model representing key stakeholders of place branding and their inter-relationships:

An interactive model (figure 8.2), as discussed in section, has been formed outlining a number of stakeholders playing an active role in place branding process. The model differentiates these stakeholders into two categories namely '*Brand Creators*' – those who are responsible for shaping a place's brand and '*Brand Drivers*' – those who are responsible for delivering a place's brand.

Each of these categories possess two segments, where, segments contributing to '*Brand Creators*' are responsible for creating and ensuring development of place's brand image, respectively and segments contributing to '*Brand Drivers*' category are responsible enhancing brand exposure and brand awareness, respectively.

This model also shows the interdependence of place brand stakeholders and highlights the importance of mutual coordination between them.

4) Exploration of the relationship between place branding, place attributes and sustainable growth:

A framework has been developed (figure 8.3), exploring the importance of place branding in developing positive attributes in terms of both tangible and intangible facets of a place and further exploring its role in sustainable growth.

The tangible components include infrastructural regeneration, development of attractions, modernized facilities, retail and business investment and overall physical transformation, whereas, intangible facets include exciting media images, positive experiences and the development of a place image that is appealing, attractive, friendly, lively and safe.

5) Examination of the relationship between maintaining momentum and sustainable development:

According to the findings discussed in sub-section (8.4) of Chapter 8, the place branding process is often catalysed by a major event or a specific campaign (such as ECoC'08 in case of the 'City of Liverpool') which results in a substantial re-development of the social and physical infrastructure which could lead to general sustainability in terms of future growth prospects. However, these developments require careful consideration, collaborative actions

and judicious governance to maintain momentum on a continuous basis. The relationship between these various factors is shown in figure (8.4).

It consists of three sub-categories, namely: overcoming challenges & issues, collaborative stakeholder efforts and implementing purposeful interventions. The relative importance of each of these categories in enhancing key areas of place branding and their relative effects on sustainable development are discussed in section (7.4.2).

6) Presentation of the importance of sustainable growth:

This study has been successful in constructing a model, shown in Figure (8.5), which demonstrates the significance of sustainable development and growth prospects in a place. This newly emerged theme shows a direct relationship between sustainability and all-round development. This relationship has not been previously documented, and indeed, to date there has been no research linking these two constructs (Chapter 4).

Moreover, this research suggests that a number of concepts contribute to sustainable development. These include increased tourism provision, traditionally inherited asset-preservation, positive media products (demonstrating the capability to attract wider audiences globally), responsive and committed governance, improved and modernized lifestyle standards, continuous infrastructure improvements via the regeneration drive, societal and community development through a range of reforms and support. All these tend to increase place brand loyalty which will then continue the virtuous circle of investment and further growth.

7) Establishment of the significance of place branding in sustainable development:

An interesting relationship emphasising the importance of place branding in directly enhancing sustainable development, has been established during this research.

The research suggests that there is a cyclic relationship between place branding and sustainable growth, whereby place branding initiates a range of tangible and intangible benefits which creates significant asset development, which in turn leads to the sustainable growth of a place. The inter-relationships of these various concepts are summarised in figure (8.6).

9.4 Contribution to existing knowledge of place branding

This research applies a unique perspective to place branding themes and its relationships with other associated constructs, particularly stakeholder involvement and its role in sustainable development. It uses advanced level coding and relationship modelling techniques applied to qualitative data from in-depth interviews to provide new insights into the interrelationships and relative importance of place branding construct.

First, it identifies stakeholder involvement and distinguishes between Brand Creators (those who actually shape the brand) and Brand Drivers (those who push and promote the brand).

Second, this research establishes the role of mega events and campaigns in the place branding process. It is clear that they act as catalysts for change, regeneration, economic stimulus, social cohesion and physical transformation: all of which contribute to brand development of a place.

Third, this research develops new insights into the place branding concepts. This is described as following:

- It identifies new categories by which stakeholders conceptualise place brands.
- It brings new insights into the multifaceted nature of place brands. It identifies new facets that have not been previously documented and again, has determined their relative importance and interrelationships. This helps re-define place branding models and also apportions the relative importance to the component parts.
- This research also helps explain what issues need to be resolved in terms of brand management in order for a place brand to progress.
- It uncovers the interrelationships associated with place branding benefits such as competitive offerings, locational advantage, hi-tech facilities, technologically advanced logistic arrangements and infrastructure, better business and employment opportunities and proven success.
- It provides further insights into the place branding concepts in terms of maintaining momentum and identifies what stakeholders are required to do in terms of overcoming challenges and working collaboratively.

Fourth, this research sets out to examine the relationship between place branding and continued growth and development. This brings together sustainable growth concepts such as improved capability, loyal and committed brand ambassadors, responsive governance, modernised lifestyle standards, positive media propagation, tactical marketing and infrastructure development. These concepts represent key aspects of achieving sustainable development of a place.

Each of these eight categories makes a unique contribution to place branding:

- **Model 1** – shows the relationship between place branding and sustainable development.
- **Model 2** – shows the role of individual stakeholders in branding a place.
- **Model 3** - shows the role of a major event (ECoC) on brand attributes and sustainable growth.
- **Model 4** - shows the relationship between maintaining momentum and sustainable growth.
- **Model 5** - shows the components you need for sustainable development.
- **Model 6** - shows the cyclic relationship between place branding and sustainable growth.

Although, this research was conducted in the ‘City of Liverpool’ and its branding campaign, it has provided a number of generic place-specific facets, which can be generalised to place branding research on almost any other city, destination or a location.

Finally, the selection of qualitative research strategy, approach and design and advance use of CAQDAS – NVivo for data analysis, in particular, has been a revelation in place branding research. Moreover, this research also shows that the use of CAQDAS in analysing qualitative data gives an opportunity to develop quantifiable data for further research purposes.

The research methodology is transferable to other areas of place branding research that propose to investigate its significance and importance in sustainable development.

9.5 Managerial implications of this research

The theories relating to place branding relationships and sustainable growth models are the result of rigorous data analysis based on the place branding campaign around ECoC’08 involving the City of Liverpool. This type of qualitative research is seen as an extension of

'natural analysis' and, in this case, is based predominantly on *'local theory'* (Schatzman, 1991), and so it may thus have limited generalisability.

However, this *'local theory'*, together with the range of place-specific facets identified in this research could indeed provide useful practical constructs for place branding practice elsewhere, and may therefore become the basis of a formal framework which has a wider and more generic application.

Key Research outputs

This research set out to achieve a number of objectives that in turn has led to number of key outputs. These include:

- 1) Differentiating the emerging 'place branding' literature from the existing knowledge of place marketing and destination branding. This was achieved by reviewing a number of concepts within place marketing such as 'Nation Branding', 'City Branding' and 'Destination Branding' in Chapter 3 and then thoroughly looking into the aspect of place branding by discussing a range of features such as its evolution, characteristics, significance, need and its application in Chapter 4.
- 2) Developing a methodological tool to construct a conceptual framework in which the relative importance of place-specific facets can be visualised. This was achieved by making advanced use of NVivo – Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software in terms of coding the responses within research participants' interviews through various 'cyclic-coding' process using 18 different types of codes to differentiate the data collected in Chapter 6.
- 3) Establishing the key facets of a place that contribute to the development of a place, and include, for example, Stakeholders, Assets, Infrastructure development, Culture and Sustainability and the understanding the mutual interaction between these key facets and their relative role for effective place brand management. This was achieved by identifying the key concepts of place branding at the initial stages of data analysis and then deriving relative categorical relationships in Chapter 7.
- 4) Further developing a framework to visualise the inter-relationship between place branding and sustainable development. This was achieved first, by establishing a range of

associative and causal relationships between '*place-specific facets*' in Chapter 8 and then finally drawing out an overall interactive framework that demonstrates the significance of place branding in continuous sustainable development in Chapter 9.

9.6 Recommendations

Following recommendations are made for the use in the place branding research:

- A clear understanding of place branding practises specific to the place under consideration is necessary, so as to make it easier to establish specific place constructs and their role in place development.
- It is necessary to review literature that is not confined to destination branding and place marketing (such as corporate branding and product branding) to provide a better understanding of place brand characteristics.
- Relationship between multiple stakeholders who are responsible for creating and driving a place brand should be explored in further detail to stimulate an advanced level of place brand understanding from a stakeholder' perspective. This is important to further develop the multiple-dimensional characteristics of a place brand from a theoretical point of view.
- Further specific research into all of the eight categories, discussed in section (7.4), should be implemented in order to examine in detail the relative concepts comprising each of these categories. This would develop extremely useful knowledge of place-specific constructs which will further assist brand creators, policy makers and regulatory authorities to develop a more competitive place brand.
- The use of CAQDAS – NVivo should be adopted as a regular practise in carrying out content analysis of qualitative data due its efficiency in terms of analysing research findings and further establishing relative relationship-modelling.
- The strategic branding practices, continuous progress, collaborative stakeholder efforts, asset-preservation, and sustaining the infrastructural developments need to be investigated from a sustainability perspective, as key facets in designing effective place branding campaigns.
- Further understanding in to the importance of effective and responsive governance, the committed involvement of stakeholders and professional leadership is required in order to enhance place brand management and its future development.

- Finally, achieving sustainability in terms of growth and benefits should be the main objective of any place branding campaign and therefore needs to be considered as a matter of priority while implementing comparative research practices. In return, this would make a place's brand image more attractive, interesting, fresh, full of opportunities, lively and appealing.

9.7 Limitations of the research

Although, efforts were made to minimise the limitations, there are nonetheless, some inherent problems and perhaps also some criticisms of the research approach. These limitations are addressed below:

- At the moment place branding is not a particularly rich field in terms of existing academic research. Whilst, this means there is much to investigate, it also means there is little empirical support or guiding methodologies for the research.
- There are those who may question the application of qualitative analysis to the area of research as being more vague and unfocused. However, from a 'constructivist' perspective, this allows a more open, explorative approach to data collection, and certainly the use of CAQDAS gives fresh insights in place brand modelling and in particular, its role in sustainable development.
- This is a place specific investigation using Liverpool'08 as a focus: this may be considered a limitation by some. However, few cities go through such a rebranding campaign and so ECoC was seen to be an ideal opportunity. It is fair to say that some of the constituent parts, and some of the facets (such as a sea-port with a particular heritage and culture) may be place specific, nonetheless, there are many other facets of a much more generic nature that have resonance in almost every other city.
- The research is time constrained and more could have been done to explore sustainability had the research been undertaken over a longer period. This is a fair point, but this is not a longitudinal study (in the same way that this is not a comparative study) and therefore it examines the role of place branding on sustainability at a given time and views those effects particularly at the point where a mega event can help create a re-branding opportunity.

However, it should be noted that the number and breadth of interviewees should not be considered a limitation. This study accepts that the place brand construct is both complex and

multi-faceted: and it rejects the notion that it can be expressed through the relatively simplistic models found in the literature. One aim of this study then, was to explore the place brand concept by eliciting comment from the key individuals who are likely to influence the branding process, and then to use advanced coding techniques to construct and map the component parts and inter-relationships. The study identified a number of such key individuals and interviewed them in a systematic way until general concordance was achieved and no new information was elicited. At the point of convergence, three more interviews were included in the data bank to absolute assurance that convergence has been reached.

In the same way credibility of the data might also be questioned. However, the first and second code cycles were scrutinised by an independent checker on completion of the coding. This confirmed both the parent and child nodes, and whilst there were a number of discrepancies in defining the nomenclature, the actual coding principles were substantiated. Indeed, the dichotomous nature and triangulation inherent in the coding methodology ensures that miscoding and misinterpretation of the data is minimised.

9.8 Directions for future research

The discussion of findings and conclusion of this research points out some interesting aspects for the future research, in relation to place branding and sustainable development. They fall into two main categories: '*pure research*' and '*applied research*':

Pure research:

1. Measuring the impact of the place-specific facets in the economic development.
2. Examining the scale of importance of place branding practices through quantitative analysis to further enhance the understanding of key constructs representing place brand image.
3. Establishing the role of the most-influential features of a place responsible for place brand identification.
4. Undertaking a comparative study of two or more cities which have recently gone through major re-branding exercise to establish importance of place branding in terms of sustainable development. Indeed, it would be interesting to explore a:
 - Comparison of recent and past cities holding ECoC titles.

- Comparison of 1 ECoC titled city to a city which has held another mega event such as Olympics or Football World Cup.
- Comparison of a city holding mega event to a city holding none of these events but still implementing regeneration and developmental practices.

Applied research:

1. Understanding the difference between destination branding and place branding practices through qualitative and quantitative evaluations.
2. Examining the role of brand associations and its influence on a place's brand image from economic development perspective.
3. Exploring the integration between leisure, tourism and hospitality research and place branding research, so as to create new approaches generating interests, for a place, from a diverse target audience.
4. Reviewing the role of functional and operational settings of the place and its importance on place branding practices.

This future research might lead to the development of new practical applications and better understanding for place branding practices, as well as further broadening the knowledge of place branding dialogue. The complex nature of place brands demonstrating the lack of ownership, leadership and responsiveness, but reflecting diverse needs and wants, makes it fascinating to investigate, and yet, very difficult to establish a pragmatic verification of place branding practices.

Finally, this research has developed a theoretical framework for effective place branding, stressing the potential through sustainable development and future growth. This research suggests place branding to be the most important technique in terms of the growth prospects of a place and therefore points out an urgent need to implement place branding practices involving key place-specific facets through effective and responsive direction of the place brand creators and drivers.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Coding Summary report (please see CD attached)

Appendix B – Node Summary report (please see CD attached)