

Place Attractiveness and Image. A research agenda.

Edited by Christophe Alaux, Laura Carmouze,
Vincent Mabillard, Martial Pasquier



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Editors

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Place branding – A focus on actors, attractiveness, and emerging trends

This book results from a PhD workshop held in Aix-en-Provence in June 2023. The workshop was organized conjointly by Aix-Marseille Université (France), the Université de Lausanne (Switzerland), and the Université libre de Bruxelles (Belgium). It provided PhD students from all over Europe with a great opportunity to present their thesis' projects or their most recent papers. A special session, focusing specifically on place branding and marketing, gathered six contributions. These contributions then received particular attention from supervisors from all three universities, and underwent a revision process. They form the chapters presented in this book.

The book consists in three parts: 1) emerging trends in place branding, especially in cities; 2) a focus on the dynamics that characterize the relationships between actors of a city or region; and 3) attractiveness for residents and tourists (especially when places are used as filming locations). The first part relates to a global phenomenon to which cities cannot escape: the general path towards sustainable transition in many places around the world. Numerous cities are participating in the development of a more sustainable planet. Sustainability is typically seen as a “catch-all” term, that covers many dimensions. Here, the two chapters dedicated to new trends in place branding, that accompany this transition to more sustainable places, focus on two main aspects: being “green” and “inclusive”.

Chapter 1, written by Run Zhao, addresses the issue of inclusiveness in cities, including a case study on Cologne, Germany. She depicts a contrast between what is presented as, in many regards, a model in inclusivity, and a reality where efforts are still to be made. Moreover, she reflects on the potential of this aspect to brand a city and to use such branding to attract targets, and what kind of targets. In Chapter 2, Joël Beney investigates how cities position themselves as green, how they are perceived in this regard, and how they may use this aspect in their branding efforts.

The second part focuses on the main actors behind place-branding and -marketing processes. Since organizations and individuals in charge of promoting a destination are central, it remains essential to better understand how they form, structure, and implement place branding. The increasing call for more participatory approaches, and the coordination challenges faced by most places, necessitate a refined understanding of these bodies tasked with improving place image and attractiveness.

Chapter 3, written by Etienne Doré-Lesachey, investigates the inter-organizational relationships between local and regional authorities on the eve of 2024 Olympic Games held in Paris, France. It discusses the challenges faced, the potential for increased cooperation (also after the event), and the main issues to consider. In Chapter 4, Dario Giuffrè concentrates on a specific aspect of attractiveness strategies designed by places: clustering. Clusters refer to closely related economic actors that have acquired specialized resources and expertise in the same business and geographical area, revealing tensions around the coopeitition logic. This calls for further research on the functioning of clusters, but also on their construction as brands, which can in turn not only increase attractiveness of the cluster, but of the region as a whole.

The third part concerns the design of place-development strategies that target specific groups and activities. While residents' attraction, and retention especially, is not completely new – cities and regions faced with emigration of people and talents have already thought about this issue for decades – residential attractiveness has often been overshadowed by economic and tourism matters. However, due to several factors (teleworking and the increased time spent at home in general), residential attractiveness has become a preoccupation for most places, now promoting life quality and lower rent/buying prices, especially outside of big city centers.

In Chapter 5, Perrine Alberola addresses residential attractiveness through the prism of geographical areas, and the related typologies. To do so, she conducts a systematic literature review that presents what has been done so far in research, and what remains to be explored. Regarding tourism, most academic contributions have focused on destination marketing. In Chapter 6, Manon Châtel prefers a different perspective, and concentrates on places as filming locations. She investigates the role played by films/series in place branding. This approach is grounded in contemporary reality, since we have observed increased flows of tourists visiting places associated with a movie or series (e.g., Iseltwald in Switzerland).

The main objective of the book is to provide the readers with compelling paths for further research in place branding, emphasizing the importance of emerging trends, stakeholder and interorganizational dynamics, and strategies (with a focus on activities and target groups).

The aim of this book is to open up new perspectives: on the one hand, by showing the research carried out by European doctoral students; and on the other, by identifying the problems encountered by public and private players in the field of territorial marketing.

Christophe Alaux, Laura Carmouze, Vincent Mabillard, Martial Pasquier

Part 1:
**Emerging Trends
in Place Branding**

The image of the inclusive city: Reflections of inclusion branding in Boston and Cologne

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RUN ZHAO

Abstract

City marketing and branding strategies are placing growing emphasis on the portrayal of inclusive cities and leveraging their inclusive policies and initiatives to foster distinctive local brands, consequently augmenting the city's allure and enhancing its overall livability. By examining the cases of Boston and Cologne, this chapter critically examines the mechanisms employed by cities in constructing and disseminating inclusive images, while also exploring the intricate interplay between local policymaking on inclusive cities and the branding endeavors undertaken by these cities. The findings presented underscore the multi-dimensional nature of the inclusive city concept, revealing that cities possess a degree of local adaptability when selecting their inclusion brand identities. While branding inclusion has proven beneficial in terms of stimulating economic growth and enhancing a city's reputation, caution is warranted to bridge the gap that may exist between brand identity and urban reality. While an ambitious policy agenda for inclusion and branding can exhibit some compatibility, it is essential for branding strategies and policy frameworks to evolve in tandem over time. Our study explores the tension between inclusive cities and branding, thereby enriching existing knowledge in city branding research and providing strategic insights for city managers.

Keywords: Inclusion, City branding, Diversity, Policy Branding, D&I

1 – Introduction

In an increasingly globalized world, cities have become dynamic entities competing to attract attention, investment, and talent. To gain a competitive advantage, urban centers engage in city branding – the deliberate process of shaping and enhancing a city's image (Andersson, 2014; de Jong et al., 2015; Kavaratzis, 2004). Numerous city brand indices and rankings have been developed, such as the Anholt-GMI City Brands Index (Anholt, 2006), the Best City Brand Index (Brand Finance, 2023), and the IESE Cities in Motion Index (Berrone & Joan, 2022). In most hybrid rankings, megacities such as London, Paris, and New York are always at the top of hierarchies, because their “dazzling brilliance” in economy and human capital can always easily cover up the problems they are facing, such as traffic congestion, high crime rates, slums and other issues of inequality and exclusion. However, there are also relatively small cities such as Zurich, Vienna, and Oslo that were recognized for their excellent performance in rankings measuring urban inclusiveness (Acuto et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2023). City rankings not only enhance cities' self-positioning and competitiveness but also encourage cities to try to manage their image in creative ways (Giffinger & Gudrun, 2010; Ooi & Stoeber, 2010). With the increase of inclusive city projects and rankings, inclusiveness has been valued by more and more city branding practitioners, researchers, and policymakers.

Creating and disseminating a city's identity and core values has been key to successful city branding (Florek et al., 2006; Kalandides, 2012; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). The inclusive city concept encompasses a wide range of factors, such as social diversity, accessibility, and equal opportunity. Collett (2014) suggests that inclusion branding related to immigration and immigrant integration has grown in prominence, identifying diversity and openness as key brand values. Machado (2020) examines cities' inclusion branding from an accessibility perspective. Branding of inclusive cities is seen as having the potential to outline distinct identities, communicate shared values, and highlight unique experiences to enhance a city's reputation, stimulate economic growth, and foster social cohesion (Alsayel et al., 2022; Belabas & George, 2023). Whereas, creating and delivering a brand that is truly representative and connects the needs and aspirations of different groups remains a difficult task for many cities (Collett, 2014). As Alsayel et al. (2022) show, cities typically promise more than they deliver and are cherry-picking aspects of inclusive cities they wish to adopt in their branding, which are often aspects that contribute to increasing creativity and economic growth.

This chapter undertakes a comprehensive analysis of the processes involved in establishing and disseminating inclusive city brands in two distinct urban contexts, namely Boston and Cologne. The inherent uniqueness of the local histo-

ries and political identities of Boston and Cologne renders them highly conducive for investigating the strategies adopted to construct an inclusive city image. Notably, both cities' governing bodies are actively engaged in branding initiatives and urban transformation endeavors, with the overarching objective of projecting their locales as inclusive, diverse, open, and dynamic. However, despite their shared aspirations, both Boston and Cologne encounter a common challenge: how can they effectively persuade a discerning global audience, critical of the often commercially driven portrayal of city branding, that their respective cities genuinely embody inclusivity?

In specific, this chapter first provides an overview of inclusive cities and city branding, clarifying their basic concepts and strategies. The importance and contradictions of inclusion in city branding will be emphasized, highlighting its transformative potential for urban development as well as potential limitations. We then present two case studies – Boston and Cologne – that exemplify the multiple approaches to brand themselves as inclusive cities. It is worth noting that instead of providing exhaustive answers to all the aspects, we conduct a more modest analysis of the correlation between branding and policy formulation. As such, this is an exploratory chapter, which is based on the literature as well as a secondary analysis of relevant official reports, policy briefs, brochures, and publications of the two cities. By comparatively analyzing their inclusive city branding practices, we attempt to reveal the similarities, differences, successes, and challenges they have encountered in pursuing an inclusive city image. The findings of this chapter have important implications for urban policymakers, city branding practitioners, and researchers interested in the intersection of city branding and inclusive city development.

2 – Theoretical background

2.1 Inclusive city in urbanization context

In recent years, the concept of an inclusive city has gained enormous attention in the context of global urbanization. While globalization has brought economic development opportunities to cities around the world, it has also exacerbated multiple aspects of inequality and exclusion in cities, such as culture and religious restrictions, gender imbalances, concentration of poverty, political alienation, and neighborhood segregation (Elias, 2020; McGranahan et al., 2016). Creating a more inclusive city is necessary to ensure that people can equally benefit from urbanization, so the inclusive city has become an important framework and goal

of urban sustainable development, in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (United Nations, 2015).

An inclusive city is “a place where everyone, regardless of their economic means, gender, race, ethnicity, or religion, is enabled and empowered to fully participate in the social, economic, and political opportunities that cities have to offer” (UN-Habitat, 2016). Inclusive cities encompass multiple dimensions of urban development. The World Bank (2015) argues that an inclusive city involves a complex web of multiple spatial, social, and economic factors, where spatial inclusion refers to the need for cities to provide affordable necessities such as housing, water, and sanitation; social inclusion refers to the need for an inclusive city to guarantee equal rights and participation for all, including the most marginalized; economic inclusion refers to the need for an inclusive city to create jobs and give city residents the opportunity enjoying the benefits of economic growth.

Subsequently, scholars included environmental inclusion and political inclusion to make their framework more comprehensive, among which environmental inclusion requires contemporary humans to produce and consume in ways that do not sacrifice the needs and interests of future generations; political inclusion refers to the relationship between citizens and their (national, regional, or local) state in terms of equal political rights and obligations before the law, political participation, and a sense of belonging to the state (Liang et al., 2022; Robin, 2014). In summary, inclusive cities in the context of urbanization represent a holistic approach to urban development that recognizes and addresses the multidimensional aspects of inclusion.

2.2 Conceptualizing inclusive city branding

Before we can bring inclusive cities into city branding, we also need to clarify what “city branding” means. It is defined here as the various practices and tools that political organizations and local governments use to develop and market their images and values associated with their city, region, or country, including brand development, communication, and maintenance, as described in Figure 1 (Andersson, 2014; Raev & Minkman, 2020). Public authorities primarily initiate branding campaigns alone or in public-private partnerships, leveraging their resources and expertise to shape the city’s brand image (Vallaster et al., 2018). The process of city branding typically encompasses three interrelated trajectories.

The first branding trajectory involved designing and promoting media-generated images such as logos, slogans, videos, and websites for outsiders to see the place in a more positive light (Bonakdar & Audirac, 2020; Ooi & Stoeber, 2010; Rehan, 2014). The second branding trajectory is based on the creation of

high-profile icons, such as hosting international popular sporting events, cultural events, or celebrating iconic city features (Ooi & Stoeber, 2010; Zhang & Zhao, 2009). The third trajectory is to brand the place through endorsements and recognitions from other authorities, such as city rankings, or as the location of major banks and technology centers such as Silicon Valley and World Trade Center (Ooi & Stoeber, 2010; Pasquinelli & Teräs, 2013).

In addition, the use of public policy as a specific place-branding strategy has also attracted more and more attention in recent years, which entails leveraging policy initiatives and actions to shape and communicate a positive and livable brand image for a city or region, such as joining and participating in international networks and organizations, participating in policy and advocacy-related competitions and award processes, inviting guests and organizing seminars for policy communication, etc. (Andersson & James, 2018; Lucarelli, 2018; McCann, 2013; Raev & Minkman, 2020). By aligning policy objectives with the desired brand image, public authorities can strategically enhance the prestige and attractiveness of the area. This approach involves implementing policies that address key branding elements, such as sustainability and green cities (Andersson, 2016; Andersson & James, 2018), cultural heritage preservation (Boland, 2013; Nobili, 2005), livability and quality of life (Reiter, 2012).

Irrespective of the specific branding approaches employed, it is evident that city branding endeavors are progressively integrating the elements related to inclusive city aspects into their brand narratives. More and more cities brand themselves as inclusive cities (Belabas & George, 2023; Nederhand et al., 2023), which is highly related to inclusive city development projects and initiatives (Mcdaniel, 2018). A range of benefits can be realized by incorporating inclusion into city branding. First, emphasizing diversity and inclusion can promote social cohesion to encourage mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation among different communities and reduce social division and conflict. For example, the city of Amsterdam is known for its commitment to diversity and inclusion; the aspiration is to create an inclusive city, regardless of Amsterdam's diverse character: "Diversity is our strength" (Roodenburg & Stolk, 2020).

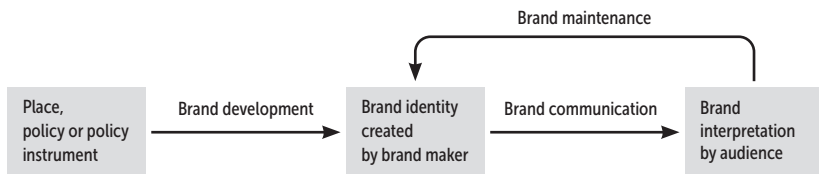


Figure 1. Visualization of branding. Source: Raev & Minkman (2020).

Second, inclusive city branding can help drive economic growth. An inclusive city brand can attract businesses and investors from diverse backgrounds, create jobs, and foster innovation and entrepreneurship. Schmitz (2017) uses the building of “Chinatown” in Berlin as an example to illustrate the positive role of inclusion branding in promoting the immigrant economy such as the catering industry. Finally, inclusive city branding may have a positive impact on overall quality of life. For example, the city of Vancouver emphasizes sustainability, environmental friendliness, and social justice in its city brand, and improves the quality of life of residents by providing high-quality education, healthcare, and social support systems (Affolderbach & Schulz, 2017).

2.3 Limitations of inclusive city branding

Despite the use of inclusive cities as a foundation for constructing an appealing and dynamic image through city branding, it is important to recognize that such branding endeavors may not invariably yield tangible transformations or effectively address the underlying structural obstacles to inclusivity. As Raev and Minkman (2020) highlight, even if the brand management process is effective, there are still limitations and challenges in the brand creation and communication process, which are mainly manifested in three aspects.

First, superficial and image-focused branding may mask the need for major policy changes and structural transformation. City branding has often been criticized for its tendency to prioritize superficial elements and ephemeral marketing techniques such as logos, slogans, and marketing campaigns that may not adequately address systemic issues such as social inequality or a lack of affordable housing (Bonakdar & Audirac, 2020; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). This limitation is not immune to the practice of inclusive city branding. For example, the City of Richmond (2022), Virginia, launched a new campaign accompanied by an “R” logo and the phrase, “Real People. Real Places. Real Stories”. This branding emphasized an identity that is singular and inclusive, however, some citizens said, “We have so many logos for the city already. I just think the mayor and his administration are trying to do big things instead of focusing on the city’s real problems” (Layne, 2022).

Second, there is the issue of brand authenticity, the “gap between image and reality”. When delivered products and goods do not meet expectations for the quality, quantity or availability of branded objects, not only may the brand lose its credibility, but it may jeopardize the branding organization (Ooi & Stoeber, 2010; Raev & Minkman, 2020; Rius Ulldemolins, 2014). For example, the social and economic depression Turin is experiencing is at odds with its attempt to brand itself as a vibrant, cosmopolitan, cultural and creative city, which has not only

led to the failure of the city's bid to be recognized as a "European Capital of Culture" but also led to protests by thousands of creative workers facing financial difficulties (Vanolo, 2015). A city branding itself as an inclusive city means the city is inclusive to everyone including the marginalized, however, this is at odds with the competition and selective attributes of city branding. In the circumstances of limited urban resources, this conflict is more obvious and can easily lead to the duplicity of inclusive city branding (Alsayel et al., 2022).

Third, insufficient attention has been paid to structural inequality, or "selectiveness of brands". As Scholten et al. (2019) explain, an important function of place branding is to position a place in a specific way, such that it distinguishes itself from competitors. Therefore, brands are often selective in emphasizing positive aspects in a self-celebrating manner, while downplaying or ignoring underlying structural inequalities. Although a city may showcase its diverse cultural activities or accessible infrastructure, it may fail to confront systemic problems such as unequal resource distribution or discriminatory policies (Belabas & George, 2023). For example, researchers have found that although the #LondonIsOpen campaign portrays London as a welcoming, inclusive city, those who benefit from welcoming behavior appear to be those who hold economic power and those who are seen as worthy of being welcomed (Yazici et al., 2023).

3 – Methodology

This chapter aims to investigate and analyze the significance of inclusion within the context of city branding, highlighting its transformative potential for urban development and the potential limitations that may arise from the pursuit of inclusive city branding. The case study method is chosen for its suitability in gaining an exploratory understanding of the complex and context-specific phenomena of city branding and inclusivity within the urban context (Ćwiklicki & Pilch, 2021; Oliveira, 2016). Specifically, we employ an exploratory type of case study which is particularly well-suited for examining relatively uncharted territory, such as the intersection of inclusive cities and city branding (de Noronha et al., 2017).

By examining two contrasting cases, Boston and Cologne, we aim to gain valuable insights into the various dimensions of inclusive city branding. The choice of Boston and Cologne as case study cities is informed by several factors. Firstly, these cities present distinct approaches to city branding and inclusivity, making them compelling cases for comparative analysis (Salzbrunn, 2014; Tissot, 2014). Secondly, their diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds offer a rich con-

text for exploring the complexities of inclusive city branding. Additionally, both cities have been actively engaged in city branding initiatives, providing a wealth of data for our study (Herrschel, 2020; Sevin, 2014).

Our data collection relies primarily on secondary sources, including literature, reports, policy briefs, and brochures. These sources offer valuable insights into the city branding and inclusive policies and practices of Boston and Cologne. By drawing from a wide range of documents, we ensure the robustness and credibility of our data. Through a systematic examination of relevant documents, we extract pertinent information and insights related to the inclusive city branding and inclusivity efforts in our case study cities. This method allows us to uncover both explicit and implicit city branding practices and policies.

Our data analysis encompasses two main dimensions: intra-case study and inter-case study analysis. Intra-case study analysis involves a deep dive into each case individually, exploring the nuances of city branding and inclusivity within Boston and Cologne. Inter-case study analysis, on the other hand, facilitates the comparison of findings across the two cases, enabling us to identify patterns, contrasts, and generalizable insights.

4 — The making of inclusive city branding

In this section, we provide an in-depth description of the case study cities, Boston and Cologne. We delve into their historical, cultural, and economic backgrounds, as well as their unique inclusive city branding strategies which include brand development, communication, and maintenance. This is followed by a cross-case analysis of both cities. As such, this chapter explores the inclusive city branding of the two cities.

4.1 The case of Boston

Boston is a city with a long history and rich culture in the northeastern United States. As one of the largest cities in colonial America, it is still the core of one of the three largest metropolitan areas in the United States (Glaeser, 2005). Boston has been committed to advancing inclusive city policies and social justice, such as inclusive education policies and programs (Johnson, 1991; Loomis, 2018), gender inclusion in the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Ozkazanc-Pan et al., 2017), inclusion

and equitable community engagement (van den Berg & Keenan, 2019). In recent years, Boston has undertaken a deliberate endeavor to brand itself as an inclusive city, recognizing the potential of this approach as a means to foster an equitable economic recovery following the disruptive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April 2021, Mayor Kim Janey initiated the “All Inclusive Boston” campaign, which aimed to prioritize equity in Boston’s post-COVID-19 recovery efforts and revitalize both local and international perceptions of the city. This endeavor was formulated through a collaborative venture between the City of Boston’s designated vendor for the Visit Boston Request for Proposal (RFP), namely, the Colette Phillips Communications and Proverb (CPC-Proverb team), and the Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau (GBCVB). Mayor Kim Janey announced the branding campaign:

“The ‘All Inclusive Boston’ tourism campaign is an important part of our agenda to safely and equitably reopen and renew every neighborhood in the city, [...] By promoting the City of Boston as a vibrant and welcoming place that embraces public health guidance, we will boost local visits now and influence travel plans for the future.”

The “All Inclusive” branding strategy adopts diversity, hospitality, and vibrancy as its fundamental principles, effectively showcasing to visitors the comprehensive range of offerings that Boston has to offer. This branding approach accentuates various aspects of the city, including its unique narratives, local establishments, small businesses, festivals, and culinary experiences. The campaign disseminates through diverse channels such as local billboards, bus shelters, share bikes, bus wraps, radio broadcasts, social media platforms, as well as print and digital publications. Additionally, it directs individuals to the website allinclusivebos.com, encouraging Boston residents to venture out and sample new restaurants or engage with different community initiatives (Figure 2). Through the website, different inclusive city aspects such as “Black Boston”, “Latinx Boston”, “Asian Culture & Experiences”, “Accessibility”, “Kid-friendly Boston” are reflected.

The branding campaign has been widely acknowledged for its instrumental contribution to sustaining Boston’s tourism industry and supporting small businesses amidst the arduous process of post-pandemic recovery. Recognizing its efficacy, Mayor Kim Janey has declared the expansion of this initiative, prolonging its implementation until the Spring Festival of 2022. Moreover, the city persists in its efforts to promote B-Local, a mobile application that streamlines local shopping experiences for both residents and tourists. Notably, this platform has garnered significant traction, boasting a participation of over 2,700 small businesses, with a considerable representation of women, immigrant, black, and minority-owned enterprises.



Figure 2. Part of the "All Inclusive Boston" branding campaign. Source: allinclusivebos.com.

4.2 The case of Cologne

Cologne is the largest city in the German western state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) and the fourth-most populous city in Germany. Cologne has a national and even international reputation for its multicultural and inclusive city brand. The municipal government has long realized the importance of a diverse and inclusive image to the city's reputation and economic growth. The local carnival attracts 1.5 million people each year, with a turnover of 460 million euros and 5,000 jobs (Salzbrunn, 2014). The city government and the carnival organization even once included the city's mosque and Cologne Cathedral in the carnival medal as a symbol of tolerance (Figure 3). In addition, as "The Gay capital of Germany", the city offers a variety of bars, restaurants, clubs, and other LGBTQ-friendly shops throughout. Every July, Europe's largest gay pride parade, also known as "Christopher Street Day", is held here, attracting more than one million participants. However, the inclusive and cosmopolitan virtues that Cologne tries to celebrate and promote during the carnival have also been criticized for lack of consistency with the city's social policy. The government has always been as careful as possible in dealing with asylum seekers in actual policymaking, and their treatment of undocumented immigrants is not as liberal and open as the city's self-created image suggests (Salzbrunn, 2014).

In addition to its diverse events and parades, Cologne has recently been bestowed the esteemed title of the European Capital of Inclusion and Diversity for the year 2022, in recognition of its robust policies aimed at promoting equality and fostering inclusivity among its citizenry, encapsulated in the comprehensive initiative known as Cologne Perspectives 2030+. This accolade not only aligns harmoniously with the annual EU Diversity Month but also signifies the city's steadfast commitment to cultivating a more inclusive and equitable society within the European con-



Figure 3. Official medal of the Cologne-Ehrenfeld Carnival 2008/09. Source: Salzbrunn (2014).

text. Highlighting the significance of this recognition, Mayor Henriette Reker of Cologne expressed that the application process facilitated the acquisition of impartial feedback concerning the city's endeavors pertaining to integration and diversity.

“A major motivation for the application was the desire to share the City of Cologne’s measures and successes in the area of integration and diversity with other municipalities as examples of good practice, [...] The exchange with European municipalities creates a space in which they can learn from each other.” (Henriette Reker, 2022)

As the first German city to sign the Diversity Charter, Cologne, garnering the esteemed Gold Award in the “Cities with over 50,000 inhabitants” category. This prestigious recognition has yielded significant domestic and international recognition for Cologne, engendering heightened awareness and appreciation for its commitment to inclusivity and diversity. Moreover, the award has served as a catalyst for effectively communicating Cologne’s inclusive policies, thus facilitating the city’s ongoing brand-building endeavors.

“Colleagues from the Diversity department were increasingly invited to give presentations, consultations, and exchange formats regarding the implementation of diversity measures by other municipalities, [...] This recognition has also increased awareness of the topic within Cologne. This can be seen, among other things, in the great demand for funding, which is used to implement projects on the topic of integration and diversity within the city’s society.” (Henriette Reker, 2022)

Simultaneously, the Cologne Perspectives 2030+ strategy presents a comprehensive framework aimed at augmenting diversity and inclusivity within the city, delineating Cologne’s specific circumstances and obligations to effectively address

the future challenges and prospects of its burgeoning metropolis along the Rhine. Under this strategic approach, a series of action plans have been devised, encompassing initiatives such as:

- Diversity Ideas: Cologne Loves Diversity
- Action Plan for Acceptance and Gender Diversity
- Concepts for Strengthening the Social Integration of the City
- Intercultural Measures Plan
- Cologne Disability Policy Action Plan
- NRW Action Plan for Good Old Age
- Child-Friendly City Action Plan
- Equality Plan according to the EU Equality Charter

Furthermore, Cologne has established four working groups that diligently strive to uphold the commitment to diversity and inclusion, ensuring comprehensive coverage of integration, LGBTI rights, disability, religion, and anti-discrimination concerns at the municipal level. These working groups actively engage various target groups in participating in the formulation of policies that directly impact their well-being and aspire to attain predefined objectives across various realms of life.

4.3 Cross-case analysis

The findings of the two case studies have been discussed in earlier sections. This section discusses the main cross-case conclusions in more detail. Table 1 attempts a summary and parallel presentation of the main findings in each city. At this point it is necessary to reiterate the issue of generalization of the case study results reported in this chapter, which was already discussed in Section 2.

The basic principles for Boston to develop an inclusive city brand are diversity, hospitality, and vibrancy, which is committed to showing the city's diverse and thriving image. The development of Cologne's inclusive city brand is based on promoting equality and fostering inclusivity among its citizens. In terms of the specific target group of inclusive city brands, Boston mainly brands its inclusive to women, immigrants, black people, kids, and other minority groups, while Cologne covers a broader range of group dimensions, including gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, age, disability, intercultural, religion. As for the specific brand communication trajectory, Boston mainly communicates the brand through media-generated images and high-profile icons, while Cologne not only communicates through media-generated images and high-profile icons but also by endorsements from the European Commission and incorporates it into the policy agenda. From the perspective of brand maintenance, Boston adopts a relatively short-term

	Boston	Cologne
Brand development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental principles: Diversity, hospitality, vibrancy • Inclusive to whom: women, immigrants, blacks, kids, minorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental principles: promoting equality and fostering inclusivity among its citizenry • Inclusive to whom: gender & sexuality, race & ethnicity, age, disability, intercultural, religion
Brand communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media-generated images (billboards, bus shelters, share bikes, bus wraps, radio broadcasts, social media platforms...) • High-profile icons (B-Local) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media-generated images • High-profile icons (Cologne Carnival, Christopher Street Day) • Endorsements (European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award) • Policy agenda (Cologne Perspectives 2030+)
Brand maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The campaign last from April 2021 to the Spring Festival of 2022 • Mainly the responsibility of governments and enterprises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term vision and strategy (from 2018 to 2030+) • Mainly the responsibility of the government and its working departments, with cross-government cooperation
Potential benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic recovery (sustaining tourism industry, supporting small business) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City reputation (tolerance) • Economic growth (tourists, businesses) • Policy communication (examples of good practice) • Promote social cohesion, mutual understanding, and well-being
Potential limitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May overemphasize and prioritize superficial elements • The consistency challenge between brand identity and city identity • Selectivity towards inclusive city dimensions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The challenge between branding and social policy coherence • Inclusion of broad groups may lead to resource conflicts

Table 1. Main findings of the case studies

campaign and marketing, and focuses on cooperative marketing between the government and enterprises; while Cologne incorporates inclusive brand into its long-term policy agenda and emphasizes cross-government cooperation.

In other words, although Boston's brand narrative emphasizes "All Inclusive", it actually focuses on all-inclusive tourism marketing. This kind of inclusive city branding plays a prominent role in promoting the city's economy and tourism. However, this type of branding can be criticized for being superficial, cherry-picking, and marketing-centered due to an overemphasis on superficial elements.

Cologne's city branding has benefits in many aspects, including improving the image of an inclusive city, promoting economic growth, attracting talent, promoting policy communication, social integration, and common well-being. The inclusive city branding of Cologne requires attention to the challenges of brand and social policy consistency and the resource conflicts that may arise in comprehensive brand delivery.

5 – Discussion

Several conclusions can be drawn from the comparative analysis of the cases of inclusive city branding in Boston and Cologne. First of all, two cities with diverse backgrounds both value inclusive brand identity and regard diversity as the core value of the brand. It is worth noting that although diversity and inclusion are interdependent and have long been used simultaneously in brand communication, diversity cannot actually be equated with inclusion (Jonsen et al., 2021; Oswick & Noon, 2014; Roberson, 2006). According to the researchers, diversity branding focuses on emphasizing differences, while inclusion branding emphasizes how people feel valued and included by the organization (Jonsen et al., 2021).

As for the brand identity of an inclusive city, due to the multi-dimensionality of the concept, the city may also choose different aspects of inclusiveness (Alsayel et al., 2022). For instance, in contrast to Cologne's brand of inclusivity, Boston primarily branded inclusion in terms of race, gender, and sexuality, but not religion and disability. Overall, the two cases in this study show that cities often emphasize inclusive images of women, immigrants, and LGBTQ+ groups, which in turn creates neglect of other potentially excluded groups such as the poor and the disadvantaged people with physical and mental illness. This not only reflects the local adaptability logic of inclusive cities as a global concept but also reflects the neoliberal and/or humanitarian logic behind cities picking different inclusive dimensions for branding (Alsayel et al., 2022; Salzbrunn, 2014).

Both Boston and Cologne have used traditional brand marketing techniques, that is, creating and disseminating media-generated images and developing high-profile icons. However, it is obvious that inclusive city branding based on marketing techniques is relatively short-lived, and it is easier to be questioned and criticized because it is difficult to match with local policy development (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). In other words, when inclusive city branding is a marketing tool, it needs to focus on bridging the gap between brand image and urban reality. In addition, Cologne's inclusive city branding adopted endorsements and

recognitions from other authorities and the use of public policy as a strategic trajectory for city branding, which received a relatively more positive response. Thus, the study suggests that while the nature of the relationship between city branding and policymaking from the perspective of neo-liberal urban entrepreneurship is controversial, they are compatible when the two values are aligned (Andersson & James, 2018; Demaziere, 2020).

Third, cities brand inclusivity for a variety of reasons, ranging from promoting economic growth and enhancing a city's reputation to meeting citizens' needs and sustainable development. In this study, Boston uses inclusive city branding as a post-pandemic economic recovery tool, while Cologne also generates significant economic benefits due to annual inclusive branding events such as Carnival and Christopher Street Day. However, branding inclusion and diversity may not be about achieving inclusivity, but rather as a superficial strategic proposition to appeal to narrow target groups such as creative workers and tourists (Falcous & Silk, 2010). The arrival of a large number of tourists, talents and investment may cause great pressure on local resources, such as housing tension, poor public security and gentrification, leading to "anti-branding" (Braun et al., 2013; Lundholt et al., 2020; Vallaster et al., 2018). In this study, the branding of Cologne as a European Capital of Inclusion and Diversity not only promotes awareness of the topic within the city but also facilitates policy exchange between cities. However, according to previous studies, when cities brand labels related to sustainable development, the focus of policies needs to avoid "narrowness" and be adjusted in time with time and social conditions (de Jong et al., 2015).

6 – Conclusion

This chapter attempts to discuss how inclusive city images are used in the process of city branding by analyzing the cases of Boston and Cologne and linking them to issues and contradictions noted in previous research on city branding and inclusive cities. The various city rankings mentioned at the beginning of this chapter attempt to reflect the call for attention to the current quality of life in cities. When a city is more inclusive it makes the city more livable and attractive, which in turn becomes the city's brand and attracts global media attention. Promoting inclusive cities has become a major goal of city authorities (Elias, 2020; McGranahan et al., 2016). In the field of city branding, images of inclusion and diversity have also received increasing attention (Alsayel et al., 2022; Belabas & George, 2023; Florida, 2004). This chapter has important implications for academic researchers and city managers.

The contribution of this chapter to the theory mainly lies in the enrichment of the city branding theory, especially its turn in brand identity and brand practice strategy in recent years. In terms of brand identity, the image of an inclusive and livable city centered on human rights has been selected as a more sustainable brand identity, rather than the simple pursuit of unique and exotic images in the past. In terms of brand practice strategy, this study once again explores the shift from neoliberal urban marketing-led branding to policy-based urban branding. From a practitioner's perspective, this chapter affirms that branding of inclusive cities – even if they are only briefly marketed – can be important for promoting economic growth and attracting talent, as it can greatly influence audiences. Furthermore, the chapter argues that integrating branding with substantive measures such as inclusive urban planning, equitable resource allocation, and participatory governance can help bridge the gap between inclusive brand images and inclusive urban realities, leading to meaningful and sustainable change. Therefore, incorporating inclusivity into city branding should be accompanied by a holistic approach to urban development that prioritizes the well-being and empowerment of all residents.

Despite the significant contribution, this chapter suggests that several limitations should be acknowledged. One limitation of this chapter is the relatively broad and qualitative definition of inclusive city criteria. Future research should aim to better define and operationalize these criteria in a more precise and quantitative manner. This would allow for a more robust evaluation of inclusion in city plans and branding efforts. For example, interviews with government managers and brand practitioners may help revealing the motivations for inclusive city branding. Another limitation is the challenge of measuring the actual impact of inclusion on various target groups within a city. Future research should focus on developing methodologies and metrics to quantitatively assess the effects of inclusive policies on different demographics and communities. Besides, this chapter did not extensively explore the distinction between inclusion policies embedded in city plans and inclusion as a branding strategy. Future research could delve deeper into distinguishing between these two aspects and examining their interplay in urban development. This research primarily provides a snapshot of inclusion within a specific timeframe. It does not account for the evolving nature of city planning and branding efforts. Future research should explore how inclusion changes over time and its long-term effects. In conclusion, while this chapter has laid the foundation for understanding inclusion in the context of city branding, it is essential to acknowledge these limitations. Addressing these limitations through future research endeavors will contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of inclusion and its impact on urban development and branding strategies.

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Face aux enjeux sociétaux

Les administrations publiques doivent contribuer au bien-être de la population en relevant les enjeux sociétaux du XXI^e siècle. Nous adhérons à cette finalité!



À la frontière de la connaissance

Le savoir offert par la science de l'administration publique doit être à la frontière de la connaissance. Nous cherchons à repousser cette frontière!



De la science à la pratique

Le savoir scientifique sert à améliorer les pratiques des administrations publiques. Nous assurons ce transfert de connaissances.

QUOI?

Nous offrons aux responsables du secteur public des formations accréditées, une recherche de pointe, des expertises étayées et des avis éclairés.



Formations accréditées

Nos formations couvrent tout le champ de l'administration publique. Leur contenu s'adapte à l'évolution du savoir et des besoins. Leur formule est flexible et leur pédagogie interactive.



Recherche de pointe

La recherche que nous développons est orientée vers l'innovation, qu'elle soit fondamentale ou appliquée. Nous la menons le plus souvent avec des partenaires universitaires suisses ou internationaux.



Expertises étayées

Nous apportons notre expertise aux autorités en Suisse et à l'étranger, à tous les échelons institutionnels. Nos conseils sont fondés sur les acquis de la science administrative et sur une large expérience de terrain.



Avis éclairés

Nous communiquons notre savoir et le résultat de nos recherches. Nous nous engageons dans les débats académiques au niveau international. Nous apportons un regard fondé sur les acquis scientifiques.

Formations consécutives & continues spécifiques certifiantes

- Doctorat en administration publique
- Master of Advanced Studies in Public Administration (MPA)
- Master of Arts in Public Management and Policy (Master PMP)
- Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) en administration publique

COMMENT?

Notre Institut cultive une approche interdisciplinaire orientée vers la satisfaction des besoins de nos parties prenantes, au niveau local, national et international.



Interdisciplinaire

Nous cultivons une approche interdisciplinaire et un travail rigoureux. Nous relevons ce défi grâce à de solides ancrages disciplinaires couplés à une démarche collaborative.



Centré sur les besoins

Les besoins de nos parties prenantes – administrations, étudiant-e-s en particulier – sont au centre de nos préoccupations. Le pluralisme de nos méthodes leur garantit des résultats probants.



Local, national et international

Nous opérons au niveau local, national et international. Nos formations intègrent les acquis de l'expérience dans tous ces contextes. Nos recherches les utilisent comme champ empirique.



Indépendant

Nos avis sont indépendants et nos résultats impartiaux, quels que soient nos partenaires, les activités que nous conduisons ou leurs bénéficiaires.

Formations consécutives & continues spécifiques certifiantes (suite)

- Certificat exécutif en management et action publique (CEMAP)
- Certificate of Advanced Studies en administration publique (CAS) dans différents domaines
- Séminaire pour spécialistes et cadres (SSC)

The main objective of the book is to provide the readers with compelling paths for further research in place branding, emphasizing the importance of emerging trends, stakeholder and interorganizational dynamics, and strategies (with a focus on activities and target groups).

It is divided into three parts. The first part relates to a global phenomenon to which cities cannot escape: the general path towards sustainable transition in many places around the world. Numerous cities are participating in the development of a more sustainable planet. Sustainability is typically seen as a “catch-all” term, that covers many dimensions. Here, the two chapters dedicated to new trends in place branding, that accompany this transition to more sustainable places, focus on two main aspects: being “green” and “inclusive”.

The second part focuses on the main actors behind place-branding and -marketing processes. Since organizations and individuals in charge of promoting a destination are central, it remains essential to better understand how they form, structure, and implement place branding. The increasing call for more participatory approaches, and the coordination challenges faced by most places, necessitate a refined understanding of these bodies tasked with improving place image and attractiveness.

The third part concerns the design of place-development strategies that target specific groups and activities. While residents’ attraction, and retention especially, is not completely new – cities and regions faced with emigration of people and talents have already thought about this issue for decades – residential attractiveness has often been overshadowed by economic and tourism matters.