

# Place Attractiveness and Image. A research agenda.

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



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# Table of contents

Editors .....	III
Contributors .....	V
Introduction .....	VII
Part 1: Emerging Trends in Place Branding	
<u>Chapter 1</u>	
The Image of the Inclusive City:	
Reflections of Inclusion Branding in Boston and Cologne .....	01
> Run Zhao	
<u>Chapter 2</u>	
City Attractiveness: To be green or not to be green?	
A Comparative Study of 8 European Cities .....	23
> Joël Beney	
Part 2: Dynamic of Relationships between Actors	
<u>Chapter 3</u>	
Managing the International Attractiveness	
of Subnational Territories: Insights from the management	
of the international attractiveness of the Paris Region	
on the eve of the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games .....	49
> Etienne Doré-Lesachey	
<u>Chapter 4</u>	
Clusters as Place Brands: Overview and Future Research .....	75
> Dario Giuffrè	
Part 3: Attractiveness for residents and tourists	
<u>Chapter 5</u>	
Places and Residential Attractiveness: A systematic Literature Review .....	97
> Perrine Alberola	
<u>Chapter 6</u>	
Filming Activity as a Tool for Influencing Place Image .....	131
> Manon Châtel	

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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 2:  
**Dynamic of Relationships  
between Actors**



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# Clusters as Place Brands: Overview and Future Research

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1 – Introduction .....	P. 76
2 – Defining place branding .....	P. 77
3 – Brand Management .....	P. 78
4 – Place Branding Process .....	P. 80
5 – Defining Business Clusters .....	P. 81
6 – Clusters as Place Brands .....	P. 83
7 – Organic and Managed Cluster Brands .....	P. 86
8 – Discussion and Future Research .....	P. 88

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DARIO GIUFFRÈ

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## Abstract

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This chapter presents an overview of the branding process for business clusters as place brands and an agenda for future research in this field. Place branding is deemed a participatory process in which different actors shape and negotiate brand meaning about a place at national, regional, and city level. Business clusters are agglomerations of related organisations that are located within geographical proximity. Developing a strong brand for a cluster can aid the overall development of such entities. However, the heterogeneity nature of clusters can make such process challenging. Therefore, understanding the mechanisms behind cluster formation and promotion becomes an imperative to suggest improvements in cluster branding practices. Moreover, place branding research beyond the field of tourism is scarce, and little is known about the dynamics of place branding within clusters. The chapter discusses an organic and a more controlled cluster formation to illustrate two types of cluster brands. The interdisciplinarity of cluster studies can provide a fruitful avenue of research for the field of place branding and marketing.

Keywords: Place branding, Marketing, Clusters, Stakeholder management, Co-creation

# 1 – Introduction

With rising competition for capital and talents owed to globalisation and the emergence of service- and knowledge-based economies, in the last few decades, places at national, regional and city level increasingly find themselves competing against each other (Papadopoulos, 2004). As one of the consequences of this phenomenon, the discipline of place branding has gained considerable attention from practitioners and researchers alike. Place branding is often deemed to be a tool supporting economic development stemmed from a neo-liberal local governance and market-oriented policymaking (Warren and Dinnie, 2018). However, scholars have questioned whether place branding can be considered as an effective policy strategy, or a set of tactical measures that are generally less effective in supporting regional growth over the long-term (Cleave et al., 2017).

Place brands are shaped by multiple stakeholders who engage in place branding processes (Pedeliento and Kavaratzis, 2019). These stakeholders need to negotiate brand meaning by engaging in fluid and open dialogues with each other (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2021). Place branding is, however, a non-linear process, as the actors involved in shaping a place brand can have different interests and access to resources (Lucarelli, 2018). Whilst extant literature helped to conceptually overcome the traditional top-down approach to place brand management, questions still arise as to how and why stakeholders with different access to resources and hierarchical positions engage in place branding (Pedeliento and Kavaratzis, 2019). Moreover, there is a paucity of studies that extend beyond the field of tourism.

Another area of inquiry that shares objectives and faces similar challenges is the field of clusters studies. Through the agglomeration of businesses, suppliers, and institutions of related and/or complementary nature established within spatial proximity, clusters can gain a reputation for being specialised in a particular industry (Porter, 1998). As argued by Kasabov and Sundaram (2013), clusters are “specific examples of place brands” (p. 538) that can be managed and purposefully transformed (Mora Cortez et al., 2022). However, the authors also highlight the complexity of brand-building processes of clusters given the too often incompatible or even contrasting interests and agendas held by the cluster members. As a result, extant literature has highlighted the importance of understanding the dynamics of power and consensus among cluster members to shed some light into the process of branding clusters as place brands (Kasabov, 2010).

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to provide an overview of the place branding process within business clusters. As a way of illustration, this chapter introduces two examples of different approaches to cluster formation and the resulting place brands. Extant literature draws many parallels between how

corporate brands and place brands are set in motion. Therefore, the discussion on stakeholder participation in cluster branding presented in this chapter draws upon theoretical foundation of corporate branding.

## 2 – Defining place branding

As discussed by Boisen et al. (2018), whilst often being utilised interchangeably, there is confusion between place promotion, marketing, and branding in the literature. In his systematic review of the extant literature on place branding and marketing from 1976 to 2016, Vuignier (2017) found that this research area lacks conceptual clarity due to inconsistent definitions and weak theoretical foundation. In this chapter, place promotion refers to communication tools used to attract potential visitors, investors, and residents. Place marketing involves strategically managing a place's image and reputation to increase its competitiveness. Lastly, place branding focuses on creating and managing a brand identity that entails various aspects of the place. More specifically, place promotion and marketing tend to be mostly short-term and tactical activities, whereas place branding is often deemed to be a more long-term and strategic approach (Boisen et al., 2018). To summarise, Table 1 below provides an overview of the definitions of the three concepts.

Due to the potential impact of place branding on the economy, governments usually create ad hoc agencies to manage their place brands (Cleave et al., 2016). "Place" is often used to cover different institutional territories, i.e., nations, regions, and cities. For instance, at the national level, the main scope of place branding is to summarise the essence of a nation under a single umbrella brand (Papadopoulos et al., 2016). City branding can play a pivotal role in making cities more inclusive and attractive to both the locals and potential future residents (Dinnie, 2011). Owing to its potential to be instrumental in a competitive marketplace between places, place branding can play a key role in urban and regional governance (Boisen, 2015) and business clusters (Pasquinelli and Teräs, 2013). As it will be discussed later in this chapter, the development of business clusters contributes to shaping an identity and image for cities and places in general.

Place branding mechanisms are complex processes that involve different groups of stakeholders. Place brands are deemed to be socially constructed objects that are alive and in constant formation (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2021). The dynamic aspect of place branding formation is often compared to the brand formation process of corporate and product brands (Pasquinelli and Tares, 2013). Therefore, the following section provides a reflection on the development of brand management over the last few decades to better understand such dynamics.

Concept	Author(s)	Definition
Place branding	Zenker and Braun (2010)	A network of associations in the consumers' mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design.
Place marketing	Boisen et al. (2018)	Place marketing involves strategically managing a place's image and reputation to increase its competitiveness
Place promotion	Boisen et al. (2018)	Place promotion refers to communication tools used to attract potential visitors, investors, and residents.

Table 1. Definitions of place branding, marketing and promotion

### 3 — Brand Management

In their review of the development of brand management between 1985 to 2006, Heding et al. (2016) identified seven different types of brand approaches. As shown in Table 2 below, according to the authors, brands have been used as a communication tool for companies to spread their messages (to passive consumers) in the first period; in the second period, brand approaches were focusing on the receiver, whereas lastly, they focused on the role of brand understood as platforms that enable societal discourses. This development of brand management is in line with emerging research streams that consider place brands as a platform for an open and fluid dialogue among stakeholders (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2021).

As argued by Holt (2003), brands represent the meanings and stories attached to a specific product or service. If, on the one hand, traditional brand theory views brands as tools controlled by the organisations behind them (Aaker, 1996), more recent studies (e.g. Hatch and Schultz, 2009; von Wallpach et al., 2017) argue that brands are the result of interactions between various actors. The shift from understanding brands as a static tool to a dynamic and collective process is often

Brand Approaches	Period	Focus
Economic approach	Before 1985	Company/Sender Focus
The identity approach	Mid-1990s	
The customer-based approach	1993	Human/Receiver Focus
The personality approach	1997	
The relational approach	1998	
The community approach	Around 2001	Cultural/Context Focus
The cultural approach	2000	

Table 2. The Seven Brand Approaches; Adopted from Heding et al. (2016)

attributed to the emergence of the so-called service-dominant (S-D) logic in marketing (Merz et al., 2009; Vallaster and von Wallpach, 2013). As described by this logic, value is determined in use and by the beneficiary (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). For instance, if once companies tried to instil value by adding meaning to a product through promotion, the S-D logic implies that the value of a certain product or service is determined by the purposes they serve, and how the receiver evaluates those purposes (Merz et al., 2009). According to Holt (2003), brand building is a complex process that is put into action by the firm and accomplished by three more brand-actors (see Figure 1).

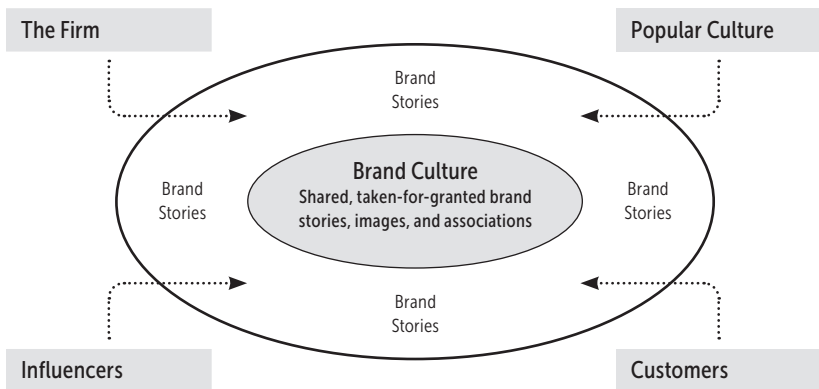


Figure 1: The four brand actors; Source: Holt (2003)

As shown in Figure 1, each brand author produces their brand-related stories. Once those meanings are widely accepted in society, they become a brand culture (Holt, 2003). Similarly, von Wallpach et al. (2017) acknowledge the critical role of the firm in initially shaping a brand and argue that brand managers need to negotiate their intended brand meanings with the wide range of actors involved with them. Whilst the academic debate on co-creation of product and service branding is well developed, there has been paucity of scholarly literature on the place branding process (Pedeliento and Kavaratzis, 2019).

## 4 — Place Branding Process

Critical questions, such as whether it is possible to market a place like a product, have arisen since place branding emerged as an academic discipline (Parkerson and Saunders, 2004). At the same time, other issues such as place brand ownership and how a brand can include all the meanings associated with a heterogeneous entity like a place have remained crucial topics in the place branding debate ever since (Florek and Insch, 2020). In an attempt to address such questions, Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) draw upon the concept of place identity. According to the authors, place brand managers should build authentic place identities upon the two principal constituents of a place: materiality (physical environments) and meanings (people's perceptions about a place). Similarly, as with corporate brands, place managers should act as facilitators of an open and fluid dialogue between internal and external stakeholders (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013). Moreover, place brand managers need to make sure that everyone involved with a place can identify with the brand (Kavaratzis and Kalendides, 2015). However, both the physical environment and one's perceptions about a place can change many times during one's lifetime.

This makes it more challenging to build strong brands in the minds of relevant target audiences (Papadopoulos et al., 2016). Another critical point concerns the views of residents, as they are crucial place brand ambassadors (Zenker and Erfgen, 2014). As residents are more aware of the issues a place is facing, e.g., housing and transportation, they often disagree with the simplified meanings embedded within a place brand for commercial purposes (Zenker et al., 2017). Drawing on this understanding of place brands as dynamic processes, Kavaratzis and Hatch (2021) challenged the assumption that place brands are process of reduction that distil the essence of a place" (p. 12). Instead, they envisage place branding as an ongoing process (see Figure 2 below) that can only result in what they call "an elusive place brand" (p. 8).

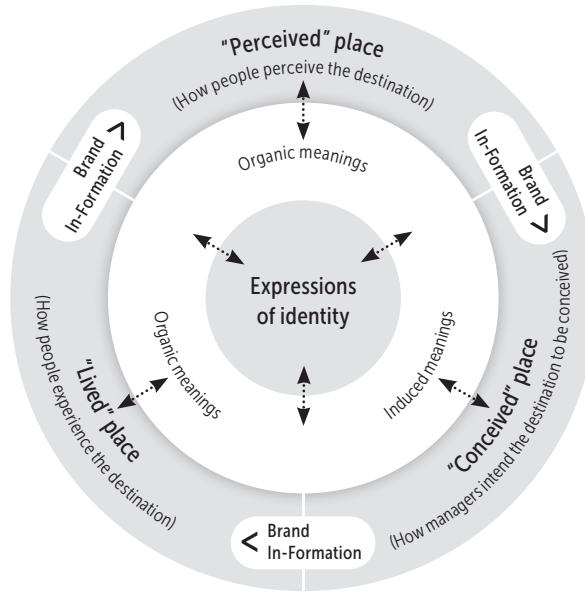


Figure 2: The ongoing place brand formation Source: Kavaratzis and Hatch 2021

As discussed before, similarly to more traditional and commercial brands, place brands can be understood as social objects and the result of negotiations between stakeholders. Stakeholders involved in the branding process may not have the same access to economic and discursive resources. Therefore, this process may not benefit all the stakeholders equally (Lucarelli, 2018). A research area that shares common objectives and faces similar issues of power and consensus is the study of business clusters (Kasabov and Sundaram, 2013).

## 5 – Defining Business Clusters

Clusters are agglomerations of interconnected businesses, suppliers and other institutions in a particular field located within enough geographical proximity to generate positive externalities (Porter, 1998). Through the agglomeration of businesses, suppliers, and other institutions of related and/or complementary nature established within spatial proximity, these clusters can gain a reputation

for being specialised in one particular industry (Porter, 1998). By concentrating resources and accumulating knowledge in specific fields, successful cluster management often results in the attraction of businesses and other entities to a particular region or city and eventually establishes that place as a critical centre for national and international excellence in a specific industry (Kasabov, 2016). Notable examples of successful clusters include the Silicon Valley in California (Porter, 1998), the One-North high-tech cluster in Singapore (Esmailpoor et al., 2018), as well as the globally renowned financial hub in The City of London (Pandit et al., 2018).

In the last couple of decades, governments at national, regional, and local levels have increasingly developed policies to facilitate the concentration of related organisations within specific areas of their territories (Haafez et al., 2016). This type of top-down approach to cluster formation is driven by the desire of public sector managers to gain the potential benefits offered by the knowledge spillovers and resource-sharing provided by the agglomeration effects (Teigland and Lindqvist, 2007).

Topics that have been prioritised in the literature have focused on clusters as market organisations (Maskell and Lorentzen, 2004), collective social entities (Teigland and Lindqvist, 2007) and pool of skills (Kasabov and Sundaram, 2016). Studies have also dealt with cluster identity creation (Beebe et al., 2013; Amdam et al., 2020), cluster building (Lundequist and Power, 2002) and branding for knowledge-intensive regions (Pasquinelli and Teräs, 2013).

According to Mauroner and Zorn (2017), among the critical success factors of business clusters, the formation of a strong cluster brand is a prerequisite to yield the full potential of this type of business ecosystems. Attaching brand meaning to a cluster can help mitigate the issue of cluster decline. Accordingly, as discussed by Pasquinelli (2013), many industrial regions (e.g., Ruhr Area in Germany, Glasgow, UK and Pittsburgh, USA) have turned to place branding to reinvent themselves as a consequence of deindustrialization and to convey a more sustainable post-industrial image. For instance, led by its nomination as European Cultural Capital in 2010, the “Ruhr Valley” engaged in a series of transformations based on innovation in leisure, tourism industries and technological service sectors. This rebrand effort brought together many cities and small municipalities from the Ruhr Valley to cooperate to benefit from the region’s cultural and economic potential. This example demonstrates how branding has more recently become a more cultural phenomenon with broader societal scopes (Heding et al., 2016).

According to statistics by the European Commission, to date, there are about 2,950 clusters within the European industrial landscape. The top 200 high-performing clusters have been found to be 140% more productive than the European productivity average (European Commission, 2021). To support cluster formation, the European Commission has recently launched a number of initiatives



(e.g., ClusterXchange and EUROCLUSTERS) to encourage collaboration among firms, build resilience, and boost innovation. This growing interest in cluster formation is supported by significant amount of public funding. Therefore, understanding the mechanisms behind cluster formation and promotion becomes an imperative to suggest improvements in cluster branding practices.

The operationalisation of cluster activities through, for example, industry organisations, often faces issues of conflict and divergence linked to consensus, or lack thereof (Lagendijk and Lorentzen, 2007). As argued by Kasabov (2010), there are two types of divergence: content related (about what) and communication related (expressed how). Actors within a cluster may still agree on collective action even if there is lack of complete consensus through negotiation (Greenwood, et al., 2002). However, as found by Kasabov (2010), if both content and communication disagreement is high, coordination of action is limited. From a branding perspective, a cluster brand is formed by the brand identity and image. Brand identity relates to what internal stakeholders want the brand to stand for; brand image to how the brand is perceived by the external stakeholders (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013; Mauroner and Zorn, 2017). Recent developments of place branding theory for business clusters have highlighted critical challenges they face. In fact, whilst clusters facilitate advanced networks among firms, one of the most critical issues is creating a consistent collective brand with the wide range of stakeholders involved (Kasabov and Sundaram, 2013; Hafeez et al., 2016). To provide an overview of place branding within business clusters, the following section discusses clusters as place brands and the challenges faced in such processes.

## 6 – Clusters as Place Brands

Conditions such as the presence of physical, intellectual, and other resources within a region are potential drivers of cluster formation (Porter, 1998). Accordingly, commentators often argue that the nature of clusters is organic (Kasabov, 2010). However, Hafeez et al. (2016) have found that place branding and image have played a pivotal role in sustaining Dubai's key sectoral clusters such as trade, tourism, and logistics. Moreover, Dubai's strong place brand also contributed to the development of new clusters, i.e., health care, ICT, and media (Hafeez et al., 2016). According to Kasabov and Sundaram (2013), clusters are "specific examples of place brands" (p. 538), that can be purposefully transformed (Mora Cortez et al., 2022). Similarly to corporate brands, a strong cluster brand needs to find a balance between its internal identity and the image perceived by the external stakeholders. The cluster identity is often linked to the industrial landscape and

its development. For instance, in their study of three cluster projects in Norway, Rypestøl et al. (2021) found a relationship between positive cluster development and the upgrade, diversification and emergence of regional industries. According to Romanelli and Khesina (2005), cluster development can reinforce a place's industrial identity. This process is, however, conditioned by the degree of agreement of residents and external stakeholders about the suitability of a place for particular kinds of business activity (Romanelli and Khesina, 2005).

The development of clusters is not linear and can be thought of as an “adaptive cycle” in which clusters emerge, thrive, decline, or even disappear (Martin and Sunley, 2011, p. 1300). As argued by Belussi (2018), the different activities undertaken by the cluster firms may influence the overall cluster's change, renewal and internationalisation process. At the same time, cluster membership may affect firms, in a positive or more negative way, differently, based on their orientation, i.e., multinational or uninational enterprises (Pandit et al., 2018). For instance, Admam et al. (2020) found that firms within a cluster may observe and are inspired by the collective cluster identity. However, over time, the impact of the collective identity of a cluster may deteriorate as the firms gain their own experience (Admam et al., 2020). Using a French energy cluster as a case study, Pinkse et al. (2018) found that clusters can face a so-called “cluster paradox” when the collective identity indirectly hinders action towards disruptive transformation necessary for cluster renewal. As discussed by Grimbert et al., (2023), a more structured place branding process for clusters can mitigate the inertia originated by the logic of belonging hence providing a tool for the cluster organisation to embrace innovation. However, whilst shaping a consistent identity for the cluster is highly desirable, the often-contrasting agendas of the stakeholders within the cluster hinder such processes (Kasabov and Sundaram, 2013). As a result, the brand identity of a cluster may be fragmented, and it is difficult to define a common one (Mauroner and Zorn, 2017).

The following table presents four main approaches to and key challenges of cluster branding drawn upon the above discussions. The four approaches are differentiation, corporate communication, company values and internal branding (see Table 3). As shown in Table 3, the four approaches face similar key challenges: finding a point of cohesion.

The actors who engage in multiple interactions within the cluster can be considered co-creators of the cluster brand (Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2018). Interactions, hence, brand meaning exchanges, occur at different nested levels of context. Examining the cluster branding through its nested interactions and could provide insights and a better understanding of how and why place branding in clusters occurs. These levels can be micro, meso and macro level (Chandler and Vargo, 2011). In the case of cluster brands, the micro level refers to interaction at the level of the individual firms with their direct customers (dyadic exchange). The meso

Approach	Focus	Key challenges
Cluster brand as differentiation	Marketing campaigns and managing corporate image	Positioning; Visual cohesion
Cluster brand as corporate communication	Communication and communication gaps	Mitigating divergences between top management vision and internal and external perception of the brand
Cluster brand as a values-based approach	Focus on cluster members' values	Overcoming organisational internal resistance
Cluster brand as internal branding	Living the brand, leadership	Converting brand awareness into brand commitment

Table 3. Corporate branding approaches and key challenges; Adapted from Gyrd-Jones et al. (2013)

level may include relationships between business partners such as firms and their suppliers (Törmälä and Saraniemi, 2018). Lastly, the macro level concerns the relationships between actors within the cluster and external bodies such as governmental authorities, universities and other entities (Leijerholt et al., 2019).

As outlined in Table 4 below, there are internal and external stakeholders to be considered in the context of cluster branding. Examples of internal stakeholders are the companies, research institutions, and universities, which may form the cluster. External stakeholders could be potential employees, potential investors and policy makers who may have an interest in the cluster. Whilst a strong cluster brand can provide benefits to internal and external stakeholders, challenges can arise for both groups. For internal stakeholders, contrasting agendas and interests can hamper the branding process. Assessing the stakeholders expectations and future of the cluster can be a challenge for external stakeholders. However, understanding stakeholders expectations is necessary to enhance a smooth cooperation within a brand ecosystems (Jones and Kornum, 2013).

As highlighted by Lucarelli (2018), place branding is a fragmented process in which multiple brands, by interacting with each other, co-create the place brand. A cluster brand forged by genuine collaboration can reduce power asymmetries that may arise among actors (Mauroner and Zorn, 2017). However, cluster members have different access to resources and legitimacy based on the duration of tenure and hierarchical position in the cluster (Kasabov and Sundaram, 2013). Shaping a cluster brand, therefore, becomes a matter of balancing the expectations of the stakeholders who engage with it (Admam et al., 2020). According to Kasabov (2010), holding a high degree of geographical and organisational proximity is key to ensure the clusters' success. Yet, little is known about stakeholders' participa-

	Stakeholders	Scope(s)	Implication(s)	Limitations
Internal Stakeholders	Companies	Visibility and attention	Mediating function for diverging interests	Contrasting agendas and interests
	Universities	Exchange and cooperation		
	Research Institutions	Idea and promise		
External Stakeholders	Potential Employees	Risk reduction	Awareness on the part of political decision makers	Difficulties in assessing stakeholders expectations and future direction of the cluster
	Potential Investors	Promoting regional competitive advantage		
	Policy Makers			

Table 4. Cluster Branding Stakeholders, Scopes, Implications and limitations

tion in cluster branding and how place brand managers release control over the place branding process. Therefore, questions still arise about the extent to which the branding process of business clusters can be managed. The following section presents two examples of approaches to branding of business clusters.

## 7 – Organic and Managed Cluster Brands

High-technology and knowledge intense clusters are among the most common types of clusters studied (e.g., Lagendijk and Lorentzen, 2007; Kasabov and Delbridge, 2008). Whilst this focus may neglect other types of industries (e.g., creativity clusters), it is justified by the high interest of policy making and tradition in business research in those areas (Kasabov, 2010). Therefore, drawing upon this element, this section mobilises the example of two clusters with a different approach to cluster formation and the consequent development of cluster brands. These examples serve as an illustration of different approaches to cluster formation.

On the one hand, the BioM Cluster GmbH in Munich is a formal cluster initiative supported by the Bavarian State Ministry of Economic Affairs and Media, Energy and Technology. Early agglomerations of biotechnology companies started in Munich following the foundation of the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry in

1973. Officially founded in 1997, BioM is a membership organisation with strong links to local and international partners in the healthcare sector. BioM's headquarters are located in Martinsried, a municipality in the district of Munich that is home to a series of internationally renewed Max Planck Institutes (eg., Biochemistry and Neurobiology). As of 2023, more than 250 life science companies are located within the Munich biotechnology cluster. The company's mission states as follows: "We create a unique ecosystem in life sciences and digital health to enable innovation, growth and value creation in Bavaria". The BioM GmbH has been recognised multiple times by the European Secretariat for Cluster Analysis (ESCA) as an excellence of cluster management (European Cluster Collaboration Platform, 2021). The cluster organisation has its own trademark name, clear internal organisation and a well structured on-line presence that makes it clear that the BioM cluster is a top-down approach to branding the biotechnology cluster developed around Munich. In this case, BioM as a company aims to take a leading role in shaping the cluster brand.

On the other hand, the Cambridge Cluster, or Cambridge Phenomenon, as often referred to in the media, started to develop around 1970 with the construction of the Cambridge Science Park by Trinity College. Developed around the East of England, the Cambridge cluster includes small, medium, and micro-sized firms within a 20-miles around the city of Cambridge. The cluster is an example of a high-technology cluster spanning different sectors and industries such as biotechnology (Biotech), information and communication technology (ICT), food & agri-tech and manufacturing & materials (Rose et al., 2016). The two main sectoral clusters within Cambridge are the Biotech and ICT clusters. As reported by Cambridge Ahead (2022), the firms established within these two kinds of clusters employ about 21,980 and 20,737 people to date, whilst generating more than £5bn and £7bn annually, respectively. This makes them the most active sectoral clusters within Cambridge (Cambridge Network, 2021). As opposed to BioM, in this case, various membership organisations seek to shape the narrative discourse around the Cambridge cluster. The University of Cambridge continues to play a key role in the development of the cluster. At the same time, various networking organisations are pivotal in fostering the cluster brand. Some of the most active organisations are Cambridge Network, Cambridge Head, Cambridge& and Cambridge Wireless. To exemplify, Cambridge Network, one of the most established of such organisations states its scope as follows:

"We are a membership organisation based in the vibrant high technology cluster of Cambridge, UK. We bring people together – from business and academia – to meet each other and share ideas, encouraging collaboration and partnership for shared success".

The examples mentioned above provide two different approaches, an organic and a managed cluster formation. On the one hand, the BioM cluster is a managed cluster brand that has a clear organisational structure and strategic direction

for the brand. The Cambridge cluster, on the other hand, has developed without any particular actor being formally in control of the process. In both examples, whilst competing on various fronts, a number of organisations cooperate to promote their respective clusters and build a strong place brand for them. Joint marketing efforts that support the overall umbrella brand for the clusters are also beneficial to the single firms (Kasabov and Sundaram, 2013). The two types of cluster formation reflect the place brand process of clusters. More specifically, management who seeks control over how the cluster should be perceived, produce induced meanings. These meanings, may be different from the perceived and lived experience of the place (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2021). Organic meanings that are instead generated by the lived experience and by how the cluster is perceived reflect a place's identity that is more authentic. As discussed earlier, cluster members may have different interests and expectations about what the cluster brand shall stand for. Cluster organisations, for example, the BioM Cluster GmbH, can provide a discussion platform for mitigating such asymmetries and to enhance brand meaning negotiations among stakeholders (Kasabov and Sundaram, 2013). Developing a strong brand may balance cluster members' logic of belonging and the power dynamics within a cluster, thus fostering innovation and overall support for the cluster (Grimbert et al., 2023).

## 8 — Discussion and Future Research

This chapter set out to discuss clusters as place brands and to identify similarities and research gaps between the two areas of research. From a managerial perspective, understanding the dynamics of place branding within clusters, would allow companies to coordinate their branding effort better (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2021).

The development of brand management in the last few decades has shifted from an economic approach to a cultural approach. In the early 2000s, the marketing scholars' view of brands as social objects has been borrowed by practitioners and scholars in the field of place branding. One of the most critical issues of corporate and place brands is the issue of finding a point of cohesion for what the brand stands for. As discussed by Kasabov and Sundaram (2013), an area that shares common objectives with place branding and faces similar issues is the study of clusters.

Clusters may originate organically through the presence of certain factors such as geographical conditions and physical resources. As discussed by Hafeez et al. (2016), economic development policies and place branding initiatives at the regional level can support the development of clusters. Existing literature has shed

some light on the co-creation process of place branding, hence defining place branding as an open and fluid dialogue between internal and external stakeholders. However, as discussed in this chapter, there is a paucity of studies that extend beyond the field of tourism, and little is known about how and why stakeholders engage in place branding within clusters. Therefore, further research into place branding processes could give greater attention to the stakeholder management to understand how brand value is created within clusters. Focusing on the issues of power and consensus in place branding would be necessary to understand the different access to economic, discursive, and social cultural resources to engage in the brand-related debate that eventually shapes what a cluster stands for.

On the grounds of the cluster members' ever-changing access to resources to engage in brand-related discourses (Vallaster and Von Wallpach, 2013), a promising line of research would consist in conducting research of the cluster branding process at different stages of a cluster's cycle and from the perspective of cluster members who hold different hierarchical positions within the cluster. For the same reason, it would be worth to empirically evaluate the role of legitimacy and isomorphism in influencing cluster members' behaviours during the cluster branding process, for cluster members may tend to become homogeneous due to long-term socialising with one another (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).

There have been a few studies that have analysed the development of cluster brands (e.g., Hafeez et al., 2016; Mauroner and Zorn, 2017). These studies, however, have focused on clusters that have a similar origin and are located in the same regional or national context. Future studies could utilise a comparative methodology to focus on different types of cluster development and assess the role of institutions such as legal frameworks of different countries in influencing the cluster branding process.

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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.