Introduction: the ‘country’ vs. ‘place’ and ‘marketing’ vs. ‘branding’ conundrum

Nicolas Papadopoulos and Mark Cleveland

TO BEGIN ... WHY ‘PLACE’?

We have made elsewhere the claim that ‘place’ is an omnipresent, central, and critical part of human life, and one of many sources on the Internet (www.rhymezone.com, 2020) conveniently provides a *partial* list of no fewer than 486 common phrases that include ‘place’ and help to show how true that claim is. Here are some extracts from the list:

- Some phrases use ‘place’ figuratively or in a sense mostly different from its meaning in this book, but it can still be instructive to consider how broadly the word is used – as in, for example, *a first-place finish*, *in the first place*, *placing a premium on*, *staying in place*, *being put in one’s place* or *being commonplace*, *having one’s heart in the right place*, and being psychologically in *a good place* or *a bad place*.
- At the other end are numerous phrases that, whether directly or indirectly, clearly refer to physical or mindset places, such as *place name*, *place of birth*, *being in the right place at the right time*, *between a rock and a hard place*, *out of place* or *all over the place*, and having *pride of place* or *a hiding place*.
- In between these are references to *place settings* or *place cards* at a formal dinner and *having a place at the table*, as well as *place mats*, numerous uses of ‘place’ in popular culture such as the TV series *Melrose Place*, *Archie Bunker’s Place*, and *Peyton Place*, and *no place to go* and *no place to hide* unless we find *a place to be*.
- Then there are geographically-specified *watering places*, like those zebras use in Africa, *holy places* like Mecca, Medina, or Jerusalem, *places of worship* including Hindu or Shinto temples, Christian churches, and Muslim mosques, *polling places* and *census-designated places*, *resting places*, *nesting places*, *principal places* (a.k.a. headquarters) or just *places of business*, *meeting* and *gathering places*, events *taking place at X*, organ-

izations from firms to espionage agencies that have *an agent in place*, and *dwelling places*.

- And of course there is *no place like home* – but still, for the eventuality that one does not have a ‘home’ place as such, there are many types of *mythical, imaginary, or dreamed-of* places, from the Garden of Eden, Camelot, El Dorado, Valhalla, Nirvana, and Shangri-La to *a place to call home, a place of our own, a place to grow, and our place in the sun*.

The list from which we selected the sample of 48 phrases above does also include several more that are directly related to marketing and the theme of this book, which obviously deserve special treatment here. These include not just the all-important *marketplace* but also *place of origin, sense of place, place attachment, place theory, place branding, place identity, and place management*.

Just add a few key missing terms (e.g., *place marketing, place belongingness*), ensure that it is well understood that a ‘country’ is just as much a ‘place’ as a ‘city’ or ‘town’ (e.g., *country origin, national identity, nation branding*), and, given the enormous importance of place in life, there is a natural expectation that there would also be an enormous amount of research on it, that those dealing with place marketing would have all the necessary know-how to do their job effectively, and everything would, well, *fall into place*.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. Instead, in a near-literal sense, we are *all over the place*.

PLACES AND COUNTRIES, MARKETING AND BRANDING, AND SILOS OF KNOWLEDGE

Things haven’t *fallen into place* because, while indeed research in the area is vast and practice in it is burgeoning worldwide, both are split into two sets of silos which turn what might have indeed been a truly enormous amount of knowledge into a fragmented landscape of scholars and practitioners. In a nutshell, some study or practice ‘place’ and some ‘country’, some speak of ‘marketing’ while others speak of ‘branding’, and there is little or no interchange of ideas between the silos within each set.

Actually there are several silos in this field when considering the areas that study or practice it. To name just a few: (a) *Place branding* (PB) deals mostly with places at the *sub-national* level (e.g., cities, towns, tourism regions) and either focuses on *branding* as such, which is just a sub-part of one (Product) of the four elements of the marketing mix, or includes other parts of the mix, thereby fuelling the misconception that ‘marketing = branding’; (b) Instead, *country-of-origin* and *country image* (COO/CI) research is positioned at the nation-state level, focuses more broadly on *marketing*, and deals almost exclu-

sively with how a country and its *products* are viewed by consumers; (c) The parallel stream of *Nation branding* (NB) focuses on the *country* level but from the narrower lens of *branding*, as indicated by its title; (d) Research and practice in tourism destination image (TDI) cover both national and sub-national entities and both marketing and branding but are limited to a single sector; (e) Environmental *psychology* is interested in such issues as place belongingness and identity, while identity theory adopts a broader *socio-cultural* perspective and *ethnicity* studies a narrower context that focuses on a single demographic characteristic.

All of the above areas draw from a variety of disciplines in the social sciences, such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, human or urban geography, political science, and economics, which is a very positive characteristic of knowledge development in this area, and one from which practitioners using this research also benefit and to which they add their own knowledge from their own backgrounds. However, with just a few exceptions that do little but confirm the rule, the main areas of interest here (PB, COO/CI, NB, TDI) do not ‘talk’ amongst themselves. At base, since ‘place’ is not just a physical entity comprising landscape elements but a mental construction of how people view it, a common starting place for all these disciplines is the phenomenon of place *image*. Yet as chapters of this book show, ‘image’ itself means different things in different disciplines, as do ‘identity’, ‘product’, ‘consumer’, and even ‘place’ itself. As a result, instead of learning from each other, each of the relevant areas has its own perspectives, approaches, and methods, inevitably resulting in different conclusions as to what matters and why.

OBJECTIVES, CONTRIBUTORS, STRUCTURE, AND CONTENT OF THIS BOOK

A most obvious result of silos in knowledge is that advances in one area are not often (if at all) used by scholars and practitioners working in another. The dearth of idea exchange across fields (e.g., COO rarely draws on TDI or PB, and PB rarely uses methodologies developed in COO) means that studies in one area reinvent wheels that others consider ‘old hat’, while wheels in need of more research fall in-between silo cracks.

Given the above, our purpose in launching this project and therefore the objective of this book is:

To integrate and synthesize the latest in research on the images, marketing, and branding of all levels of ‘place’ and of the people, peoples, products, and brands associated with them, taking into account the perspectives of both research and practice and of both sellers and buyers.

We are very happy and proud to say that, with excellent contributions from a stellar cast of authors, we and they believe that this objective has been achieved.

Rather than issuing a broad ‘Call for Chapters’, an easier approach that is typical in similar projects but can result in near-random collections of contributions, we first did our homework, by adding in-depth research on the leading scholars in the field to what we already knew about many of them, to identify and invite a select group whose members would meet three key criteria: they would be at the cutting edge of know-how in their respective areas, prepared to address important topics from an indicative list we supplied, and hailing from various countries so as to provide an internationally-applicable perspective on the issues.

We were gratified by the response, as virtually all of those we invited became excited over the book’s objectives and agreed to participate. In all, the star ensemble of authors in this volume consists of *28 leaders of thought from 22 universities in 13 countries* (Belgium, Denmark, Italy, France, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, and the UK in Europe, Australia and New Zealand, and Canada and the United States) – a broad scope that assures state-of-the-art and international-minded coverage of the topics. The contents reflect a major departure from the status quo and make fresh and original contributions that can be classified in two main types: state-of-the-art syntheses of research within individual sub-disciplines, and integrative cross-disciplinary works that bring disparate approaches under one roof.

We ourselves have read more and learned more during the development of this project than we could possibly describe, and, together with our contributors, we invite readers to join us in learning from this volume’s content, which is briefly described below.

Following this Introduction to the book by the co-editors, the place phrase in the title of Part I speaks to what we described above: we are ‘all over the place’ even though we all also are ‘birds of a feather’, since we all deal with the *images* of things: of places (and yes, including countries, since they too are ‘places’), their people, and their products which local people and many others elsewhere consume. Chapter 1, written by Warnaby and Medway, two seasoned and globally recognized place experts who often work together, uses the setting of an iconic church in Manchester to drive home the reality that all places, from neighbourhoods to nations (and beyond) are indeed worthy of our attention. Chapter 2, by Kavaratzis and Florek, two equally known place experts who also work together, discuss place branding using the standard ‘5 Ws and 1 H’ of journalism (why, who, what, when, where, how). In Chapter 3, Papadopoulos and Cleveland, who dabble in both the ‘place’ and ‘country’ sides of the silo fence, examine how concepts used by only one side can also be fruitfully applied to the other. And in Chapter 4, Sebastian Zenker, a pioneer

in place marketing and branding, poses six propositions that expose and challenge current assumptions in place research.

Each of the next two parts deals with one of the two parts of the silos – Part II with ‘place’ and Part III with ‘country’. Part II begins with Magdalena Florek’s Chapter 5, which looks into brand models by integrating thoughts from state-of-the-art knowledge in both place and commercial product branding. Chapter 6, by the multicultural team of Alia El Banna and Ioana Stoica, focuses on an aspect that is central to much, if not most, of contemporary thought in place branding: the role of residents, who can both co-create as well as, if their views are not properly addressed, co-destruct a place brand. In Chapter 7, Andrea Insch uses her expertise in urban studies to expand on the nature and role of residents through the broader concepts of peoplescapes, placemaking, and identity in the context of a culturally diverse world. And in Chapter 8, Cleveland and Papadopoulos expand specifically on the ‘identity’ construct even more, by introducing such space metaphors as the ‘gravitational pulls’ of identity and ‘consumption constellations’ (and yes, ‘space’ is also a ‘place’) to examine the ‘fabric’ of interrelationships between persons, places, and time.

Part III focuses on ‘the other side’, that of countries, whose images indeed produce a very rich smorgasbord of thoughts and effects that have been documented abundantly in country of origin research. The place phrase that opens this part is a play on the common saying that “a picture is worth a thousand words” by replacing ‘picture’ with ‘place’ – whose worth is indeed that much and, more likely, much more. Chapter 9, by Andéhn and L’Espoir Decosta, both well-known scholars on country images and their effects, throws the gauntlet to COO researchers by heavily critiquing the current state of thinking and asking for new perspectives in that area. In Chapter 10, the team of Magnusson and Westjohn, two of the most prolific and cited COO researchers, zero-in on one of the most important antecedents of the images of countries and places, and present new research to buttress its importance in place marketing and branding: stereotyping. Chapter 11, by Cleveland, Papadopoulos, and Bartikowski, further elaborates on the various levels of place-related social and product identity, using the literature on consumer dispositions to examine in depth how products and places are inextricably connected. Chapter 12, written by the team of Bartsch and Zeugner-Roth that has already left an indelible mark on current COO thought, uses the elaboration likelihood model to examine the known central and peripheral routes in human information processing and consider how advertising cues are internalized and affect consumers’ marketplace responses. And in Chapter 13 Michela Matarazzo takes us to a different ‘place’ where she is a notable thought leader – the effects on buyers’ perceptions of products when their producer’s ‘home’ country changes through cross-border acquisitions and offshoring.

Last but not least, Part IV presents yet another smorgasbord, this time of topics critical for a full understanding of country/place marketing/branding, through six chapters that discuss research advances and setbacks with a focus on how various concepts are applied and the interrelationships (the ‘Associations’ in the part’s title) between them.

Chapter 14 is written by Rick T. Wilson, an expert in all three of the main subjects he deals with – advertising, place branding, and investment promotion agencies working to attract foreign investors – who presents a strategic place branding and advertising model that is of great interest to both researchers and managers.

The next three chapters cover three issues that are essential in understanding what place marketing and branding are all about and how far managers’ practices reach in shaping the communities and countries we live in. For Chapter 15 Eduardo Oliveira, an innovative and prolific researcher, is joined by Anna Hersperger, head of the Land-Use Systems Group at the Swiss Federal Research Institute WSL, to consider the nature and importance of strategic spatial planning in relation to place branding. In Chapter 16, Candace White uses her deep knowledge in media and communications to explore the influence of popular culture on the image of countries and their products, with a focus on perhaps the biggest cultural exporter of them all: the United States. And for Chapter 17 Nina Kramareva, who works on sports mega-events and their role in national identity formation, joins Jonathan Grix, a globally leading scholar on the business and politics of sport, to focus on how hosting events such as the Olympic Games interacts with and affects a country’s image and overall welfare.

Next, in Chapter 18 Anette Therkelsen and her colleagues Laura James and Henrik Halkier, all located in Denmark, speak to one of the hottest topics of the day and one that will be with us for a long time to come – place sustainability, using the case study of Aalborg, a Danish city in a country that is among the forerunners in working toward sustainability and therefore most appropriate for discussing it.

The above assemblage, or even parade, of topics of major contemporary interest written by authors of know-how and wisdom, could not conclude without calling upon one of the most recognizable voices in the ‘place’ profession: Robert Govers. In Chapter 19, the prolific author, independent consultant, Founding Chairman of the International Place Branding Association, and Co-editor of the journal *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, among many other accomplishments, offers his views on the place branding area’s past, considers its future, ties both into the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected the entire world in ways previously hard to imagine, and challenges all of us, authors and readers alike, to think, think, think, about how to enhance and

establish the *relevance* of place marketing among those who matter: the people who live in places and those who manage them on the people's behalf.

The book's Epilogue by the co-editors takes us back to where we began, using a well-known place phrase in its title, "Between a Rock and a Hard PLACE", and followed by eight sections whose subtitles, quite naturally, are also prefaced by well-known place phrases relevant to the corresponding themes. The aim here is to reorganize the contributions into a selected set of challenges, arising from the chapters described above, in order to provide readers with our reflections about future place-associated research expeditions.

The epilogue uses the Ship of State metaphor of a ship sailing in the ocean to stress how, just as the affairs of a state and the course of a ship commonly face rough seas, so does the country/place marketing/branding Ship we are trying to run, whether as editors, authors, and research or practitioner readers. As the old saying goes, the fun is in the journey, and ultimately reaching a 'perfect' destination is untenable in any case – so we can only hope you will join us in navigating through the high seas that confront us to ensure that, at the very least, we keep moving in the right direction.