1. Introduction: Brands and branding geographies

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INTRODUCTION

Blundstone boots are an archetypal Australian product, produced by a '100% Australian family-owned' business since 1870 in Hobart, Tasmania. The brand's differentiation and value are based upon its hard-working, tough and sturdy attributes situated in its particularly Australian national context (Blundstone 2010:1). Going by the slogan of 'Australian for boot' and using Australian rock legend Angry Anderson as 'the face of Blundstone', 'Blunnies' are marketed as tough, sporty and comfortable, and provide 'hard working footwear for "Hard Working Men"' (Blundstone 2010:1). In the early 2000s, Blundstone employed 500 people in Hobart, and the company was considered 'the last major full footwear manufacturer in Australia' with '80% of their product . . . fully manufactured in Australia, 15% have uppers made overseas and 5% . . . fully imported' (Colbeck 2003: 4).

By 2007, the brand owner's Australian manufacturing operation faced acute cost and viability pressures. These resulted from trade liberalisation and increased competition for consumers demanding increasingly differentiated products requiring extra labour content and 'en masse . . . not willing to pay more dollars for product that is of comparable quality and features just because it is Australian made' (Blundstone 2010:1). Exhausting its potential to further improve productivity and innovation in its Australian factory, the company concluded that 'all we can see is our costs going up, the market forcing our prices to either drop or stay the same' (Blundstone 2010:1). Blundstone decided to relocate most of its production overseas to India and Thailand, where labour costs were one-fifteenth to one-twentieth of local Australian costs, resulting in the loss of 360 jobs in Hobart (Darby 2007). Amidst public outcry that such iconic goods were no longer being 'Made in Australia' and talk of product boycotts, Blundstone argued that:

Long after the rest of our industry had relocated most, if not all, of its manufacturing offshore, we have been trying our darnedest to make a fist of local manufacturing – at the expense of profitability. Blundstone is privately owned by people who are committed to the Australian community. Had we been publicly owned, the pressure to make a return for shareholders year on year would have seen us make the same decision many years ago. We share the disappointment many people are feeling. We are proud of our 137 year heritage, the iconic nature of our brand, our workforce and products. Moving some of our manufacturing offshore has been a very difficult decision for us. (Blundstone 2010:1)

Particular constructions of the ‘Made in Australia’ attribute that created meaning and value for its brand owner were thrown into question by the shifting geographies of consumer demand and Blundstone’s material production in an international context. And this episode in the life of a brand and its branding is important because it illustrates not just symbolic but material effects on the livelihoods and prosperity of people and places. Trading on its local origins, Blundstone will continue to be ‘Australian owned and passionate about Australia’ (Blundstone 2010:1), but the shift in production was expected to leave only a ‘skeleton Australian workforce in sales, customer service and head office’ employing about 100 by the end of the 2007 (Darby 2007: 1). While ‘The brands live on and the company lives on’ (Chief Executive quoted in Darby 2007: 1), Blundstone faces intense competition for consumers who appear to be ambiguous about, if not disinterested in, the provenance of the boots in their purchasing decisions.

The experience of Blundstone’s boots demonstrates the importance and significance of the value and meaning of the inescapable geographical associations and connections wrapped up in the brands and branding of goods and services. Brands and branding can sometimes seem pervasive, especially when brands are claimed to be a ‘central feature of contemporary economic life’ (Lury 2004: 27) and branding is interpreted as a ‘core activity of capitalism’ (Holt 2006: 300), and when some interpret a ‘well nigh all-encompassing brand-space’ (Arvidsson 2005: 236) in which it can appear ‘as if there is hardly any market arena, not even a niche, that has been left uncolonized by branding processes’ (Goldman and Papson 2006: 328). Brands and branding geographies matter in this context because the spatial and multi-faceted nature of brands intersects economic, social, cultural and political worlds; they are simultaneously ‘economic’ as goods and services in markets, ‘social’ as collectively produced, circulated and consumed objects, ‘cultural’ as entities providing meanings and identities, and ‘political’ as regulated intellectual properties, traded financial assets and contested symbols (Pike 2009).

Yet the ways in which the geographies of space and place are inescapably intertwined with brands and branding have been unevenly recognised

Source: Author's calculation from ISI Web of Knowledge databases.

Figure 1.1 Number of articles with 'brand' and/or 'branding' in their title, 1969–2009

and under-researched. Important reasons are, first, that brands and branding are a longstanding, crowded and periodically fashionable field in the academic and popular literature. Notwithstanding some differences in usage and meaning, a crude tally of articles with 'brand' and/or 'branding' in their title published between 1969 and 2009 demonstrates the increase in academic attention across disciplines in this area and its dramatic growth since the late 1990s (Figure 1.1). Work spans across numerous disciplines (including Architecture, Business Studies, Economics, Economic History, Geography, International Relations, Marketing, Media Studies, Planning, Political Science, Tourism Studies, Sociology and Urban Studies) and is reflective of a burgeoning industry spawning a multitude of prescriptive guides and analytical frameworks from gurus and practitioners (e.g. Anholt 2006; Hart and Murphy 1998; Olins 2003; Roberts 2004), academics (e.g. de Chernatony 2001; Kapferer 2008) and international consultancies (e.g. Interbrand, Saffron). A political sociology of the production of this literature would reveal a sometimes sharp, but often blurred, distinction between work focused on how to do brands and branding better and other studies concerned with questioning its purpose, value and effects. Such diversity and variety in the approaches, aims and ways of thinking

about brands and branding have fostered only partial and fragmented engagement with their spatial aspects. Second, brands and branding have drastically extended their reach beyond just goods and services in the economy and culture more deeply into society and polity by encompassing knowledge, people, places, charities, campaigns, universities, political parties, states and supranational institutions (Moor 2007; van Ham 2008). This dramatic growth and pervasiveness have made it difficult to keep pace for the tasks of conceptualising, theorising and studying empirically the geographies of brands and branding. Even within the more spatial disciplines, despite their apparent reach and relevance for geographical inquiry, economic geography in particular has 'consistently undervalued brands as an area of study' (Power and Hauge 2008: 21).

While a literature is emerging (see, for example, Cook and Harrison 2003; Edensor and Kothari 2006; Jackson *et al.* 2007; Lewis *et al.* 2008; Pike 2009; Power and Hauge 2008), there has been little examination or formulation of conceptual and theoretical frameworks to understand brands and branding geographies and to inform empirical work. Contributing to addressing this gap, the origins of this collection lie in an effort to focus and further develop our understandings of the geographies of brands and branding. The overarching aim is to provide a reference point for the emergent topic of brands and branding geographies in a multi-disciplinary and international context. Specifically, the collection aims:

1. to engage critically with and establish the emergent conceptual and theoretical literature and empirical analyses on brands and branding geographies;
2. to connect and relate the leading edge multi-disciplinary and international work on the spatial dimensions of brands and branding, especially exploring links between the hitherto separate strands of studies of goods and services and space and place brands and branding;
3. to engage with and reflect upon the contribution of geographical understandings in considering the politics and limits of brands and branding;
4. to map out potential future research directions for the geographies of brands and branding.

To fulfil such aims, the process began with an open call for contributions which filled a set of four themed sessions at the Association of American Geographers Conference in Boston in 2008 and, second, the commissioning of further contributions from leading voices in disciplines beyond geography internationally. No claim is made to any exhaustive

comprehensiveness – no doubt other authors, disciplines, empirical studies and/or geographies might have been included – but the collection has sought to identify and incorporate the most important and resonant concerns for brands and branding geographies. To frame what follows, this introduction seeks to establish the geographical nature of brands and branding by explaining their inescapable spatial associations and connotations, spatially differentiated manifestations and circulation, and uneven development. The organisation of the collection is then outlined.

ESTABLISHING THE GEOGRAPHIES OF BRANDS AND BRANDING

The pervasiveness of brands and branding underlines the need to establish their geographical nature and to develop conceptual and theoretical ways to interpret and explain their spatial aspects. This collection seeks to establish and further develop the following arguments: i) brands and branding are geographical because they are situated in and/or associated with spaces and places; ii) brands and branding travel and are experienced differently across time and space; and iii) richer people in prosperous places have different roles than relatively poorer people in less prosperous places in relation to the spatial circuits of value and meaning in the production, circulation, consumption and regulation of brands and branding.

Inescapable Geographical Associations and Connotations

As an identifiable kind of good or service, a brand is constituted of values or ‘equity’ (Aaker 1996) – such as associations, awareness, loyalty, perceived quality and, crucially, origin – that are imbued to varying degrees and in differing ways by spatial connections and connotations. As a process that works to articulate, connect, enhance and represent the facets and cues embodied in brands in meaningful ways (Moor 2007), branding too is enmeshed in and cannot rid itself of geographical associations and contexts. What values and meanings people ascribe to specific brands and how they respond to branding, for example, are entangled in their own socio-spatial relations and identities and their perceptions of the brand and branding’s spatial associations and connotations. Echoing marketing’s longstanding ‘country of origin’ effect (Bilkey and Nes 1982), where brands are perceived to have come from or the ‘place of the brand’ is a longstanding and discernible influence in purchasing decisions (Papadopoulos, this volume, Chapter 2). As Bernstein (1984: 133) argues, ‘Brands are born somewhere. Companies are born somewhere

. . . international brands are creations of their homelands.’ Over time, branded objects and branding processes accumulate histories that are social *and* spatial and matter to their evolution. In diverse ways and to variable extents, space and place are written through branded objects and the social practices of branding. It might even be said that brands and branding embody an ‘inherent spatiality’ (Power and Hauge 2008: 21).

One way to further develop our conceptualisation of the inescapable geographies of brands and branding is by drawing upon the interdisciplinary debates about entanglement in economic anthropology and economic sociology. This work focuses upon the ways in which commercial imperatives in markets are compelling the ever more inclusive entanglement of – typically branded – goods and services in the lives of consumers. Such ‘transactable objects’ are being made meaningful across a ‘diversity of values and value systems by the agency of sellers – often through branding processes – across a range of registers (e.g. rationally, aesthetically, culturally, morally)’ (Barry and Slater 2002: 183). Competition is driving innovation and differentiation in the ‘qualification’ and ‘singularisation’ of goods and services and their closer attachment to consumers (Callon 2005: 6). Examples include the ways in which certain brands offer heightened customisation of products, the configuration of bespoke packages of services for individuals and the creation of retail experiences through ‘brandspace’ outlets in particular places (see, for example, Klingman 2007). Through market transactions, Callon (2005) sees a necessary moment of framing and disentanglement that frees the protagonists in exchange from further ties that would prevent the inalienable transfer of property rights. In contrast, Miller (2002: 227) interprets a process of increasing entanglement because:

most industries have to engage in highly qualitative and entangled judgements about looks and style and image and ‘feel’ out of which they may, if they have the right sense of the ‘street’, make a profit. The way to profitability is not through disentanglement, but through further entanglement.

Amidst a broader understanding of the entanglements of space, place and politics (Massey 2005), Lee (2006: 422) sees that such:

Entangled economic geographies . . . remain unframed – or rather multiply framed – in the senses both that the agents, objects, goods and merchandise involved in them remain more, or less, imperfectly distinguished and associated with one another and that multiple social relations are at play between them.

For Lee (2006: 414), Callon’s economism and desire for a ‘purification of economic relations’ risks missing ‘the inherent complexity of ordinary

economies and thereby places limits on the economic geographical imagination'. Reflecting Miller's reading of increasing entanglements in the commercial sphere and Lee's interpretation of the complexity of entangled economic geographies, the notion of *geographical* entanglements can be distinguished to mean the spatial associations and connotations that inescapably intertwine brands and the meaning-making of branding for goods, services, knowledges, spaces and places (Pike, 2011b).

Such a spatially sensitive approach provides a way of understanding how brands and their branding are inescapably entangled in 'geographical knowledges – based in the cultural meanings of places and spaces . . . deployed in order to 're-enchant' . . . commodities and to differentiate them from the devalued functionality and homogeneity of standardised products and places' (Cook and Crang 1996: 132). Accounts in other disciplines recognise such geographical entanglement too, including 'spatial identifications' (Miller 1998: 185) in economic anthropology, 'country and cultural signifiers' (Phau and Prendergast 2000: 164) in marketing, and how 'place gets into goods by the way its elements manage to combine' (Molotch 2002: 686) in sociology. Indeed, sociologist Arvidsson (2005: 239) argues that 'Building brand equity is about fostering a number of possible attachments around the brand . . . experiences, emotions, attitudes, lifestyles or, most importantly perhaps, loyalty.' Many of such attachments have inescapable geographical associations that ensnare brands and branding, some of which attributes and connections may be emphasised, such as the heritage, quality and reputation connoted by particular places, while other markers, such as the characteristics of cheap, tacky and poor value linked to specific places, may be hidden. Distinguishing between different types of goods and services and demonstrating the connections to the brands and branding of spaces and places, Ermann (this volume, Chapter 7) refers to 'value-adding places' and 'value-reducing places' to capture this spatial differentiation in the value and meaning of the geographical associations enmeshing brands and branding (see also Molotch 2005; Power and Jansson, this volume, Chapter 9).

Geographical entanglements are more than just the material connections of brands and branding in fixed relationships to certain spaces and places. Capable of changing over time, geographical entanglements can be of different kinds (e.g. material, symbolic, discursive, visual, aural), varying in their extent (e.g. strong, weak) and nature (e.g. authentic, fictitious) (Pike 2009). Interpreting a brand's geographical entanglements, then, may reveal strong and authentic material linkages to particular origins represented in the branding of its advertising, packaging, retailing and trademark protection – as Hauge (this volume, Chapter 6) illustrates in the association of extreme sports equipment with Nordic producers,

Power and Jansson (this volume, Chapter 9) demonstrate with their analysis of Scandinavian design, and Lewis (this volume, Chapter 16) reveals in the analysis of Brand NZ. Another brand might embody weaker and entirely constructed geographical associations to an entirely fictitious or aspirational place assembled and branded to appeal to particular market segments – as Jackson *et al.* (this volume, Chapter 4) show in their examples of the ‘manufacture of meaning’ in the construction of Oakham chicken and Lochmuir salmon, and Arvidsson (this volume, Chapter 18) and Harris (this volume, Chapter 11) demonstrate in their dissection of the use of ‘creative class’ narratives in city branding.

Geographically Differentiated Manifestation and Circulation

The world’s needs and desires have been irrevocably homogenized . . . Commercially, nothing confirms this as much as the success of McDonald’s from the Champs Elysées to the Ginza, of Coca-Cola in Bahrain and Pepsi-Cola in Moscow, and of rock music, Greek salad, Hollywood movies, Revlon cosmetics, Sony televisions, and Levi jeans everywhere. ‘High touch’ products are as ubiquitous as high-tech. (Levitt 1983: 93)

As Lury (this volume, Chapter 3) notes, Levitt’s (1983: 92–93) seminal arguments about ‘the globalisation of markets’, in which ‘Global competition spells the end of domestic territoriality’ and ‘The global corporation operates with resolute constancy – at low relative cost – as if the entire world (or major regions of it) were a single entity; it sells the same things in the same way everywhere’, have resonated deeply in the world of brands and branding. For some, especially ‘global’ brands and branding are seen as vehicles in the vanguard of such kinds of globalisation, crossing borders as a ‘global fluid’ that is ‘super-territorial and super-organic, floating free’ (Urry 2003: 60, 68). Echoing the ‘earth is flat’ (Levitt 1983: 100) and ‘end of geography’ (O’Brien 1992) arguments, in this reading the picture of brands and branding geographies is marked by homogenisation and sameness, as their ubiquity and mobility serve to lessen spatial differences in a flat and slippery world (e.g. Friedman 2005). As Levitt (1983: 93) foresaw it, ‘No one is exempt and nothing can stop the process. Everywhere everything gets more and more like everything else as the world’s preference structure is relentlessly homogenized.’ Here, the sheer pervasiveness of brands and branding is turning the public realm into uniform commercial ‘brandsapes’ dominated by the same global brands and their branding of images, logos and signs (Klingman 2007). This kind of relational view of space and place emphasises an unbounded spatiality for branding and brands because through media pluralisation ‘The interface of the brand is not . . . to be located in a single place, at a single time. Rather . . . it is

distributed across a number of surfaces (. . . products and packaging), screens (television, computers, cinemas) or sites (retail outlets, advertising hoardings)' (Lury 2004: 50; see also Lury, this volume, Chapter 3).

Counterposed against this view is a more spatially sensitive interpretation of brands and branding geographies that sees heterogeneity and much diversity and variety in the ways in which brands and branding heighten geographical differentiation in a spiky and sticky world (Pike 2009; see also Christopherson *et al.* 2008; Markusen 1996). This analysis sees branded objects and branding processes as geographically differentiated and spatially uneven in, for example, their manifestation, representation, visibility, fixity and mobility throughout the spaces, places and temporalities of economy, society, culture and polity. Taking a more territorial view, this approach emphasises the delineated, even jurisdictional, entities in establishing, representing and regulating the spatial origins of brands and branding. Moving beyond marketing's *nationally* focused approach to 'Country of Origin', space and place as territory can frame geographical entanglements of brands and branding through spatial connections and connotations forged by producers, circulators, consumers and regulators drawing upon and/or delimiting territories at specific spatial levels. These scales include the supranational (e.g. European, Latin American), sub-national administrative (e.g. Bavarian, Californian), 'national' (e.g. Catalan, Scottish), pan-regional (e.g. Northern, Southern), regional (e.g. North-Eastern, South-Western), sub-regional or local (e.g. Bay Area, Downtown), urban (e.g. Milanese, Parisian) or even neighbourhood (e.g. Upper East Side, Knightsbridge) (Pike 2009).

In a more geographically differentiated conceptualisation of their manifestation and circulation, branded objects find changing kinds and degrees of commercial, social, cultural and political resonance and become sticky in specific spaces and particular places over time. The spatial circuits of the production, circulation, consumption and regulation of specific brands may be highly geographically uneven. In seeking to shape and respond to the particularities of different geographical market contexts, branding practices may similarly be spatially attenuated and heterogeneous – even for the same brand in different places. More geographically sensitive marketing analysts, for example, have demonstrated the importance of managing the global attributes of brands in their adaptation to particular marketplaces (Holt *et al.* 2004). Geographical differentiation, then, is integral to the different ways in which different people in different places see, interpret and act in response to branded objects and branding processes. Moving beyond the dualistic positions between territorial or relational views in recent geographical debates about space and place (Hudson 2007), considering the geographical entanglements of brands

and branding can more usefully address their spatialities as relational *and* territorial, bounded *and* unbounded, fluid *and* fixed, territorialising *and* de-territorialising (Pike 2009). It is argued that openness to the tensions involved and contingency of such contrary and overlapping tendencies is helpful in empirical examination of the complex and unfolding geographical entanglements and socio-spatial histories of particular brands and branding.

In thinking about causation and how to explain the geographical differentiation inscribed in brands and branding geographies it is important to distinguish how the geographical notion of entanglements renders the object of the brand and the process of branding inescapably spatial but not in a linear or simplistic way. Geographical entanglements are seldom inherent, except in specific cases such as agro-foods with intrinsic ties to particular places (Morgan *et al.* 2006) and in some versions of space and place brands and their branding. In the main, geographical entanglements in brands and branding shape and are shaped by the social construction of agents. Related and animated in spatial circuits of value and meaning, producers (e.g. manufacturers, 'place-makers', residents), circulators (e.g. advertisers, marketers, media), consumers (e.g. shoppers, residents, tourists) and regulators (e.g. trademark authorities, local councils, export agencies) attempt to construct and are conditioned by the spatial associations of brands and branding in market contexts (Pike 2011a).

Brands and branding histories accumulate geographically entangled characteristics, identities, meanings and values from which extrication or reworking can be difficult. Such 'geographical lore' can be sticky and slow changing and adhere to particular commodities (Jackson 2004) and spaces and places. These socio-spatial histories impart degrees of path dependence upon brands' subsequent evolution, trajectories and branding. For some brands these associations can be negative and difficult to shake off, for example McDonald's reputation for poor-quality fast food and its links to American economic and cultural imperialism have proved resilient despite its recent brand makeover and attempts to improve the dietary quality of its products in the UK and elsewhere (Ritzer 1998). For other brands, the close associations between products and places resonate, for example in the lasting effect of the boycott of Danish products in Islamic countries following the religious cartoons controversy in 2006, while for some brands the geographical associations can be positive and demonstrate the commercially beneficial effects of rebranding. South Korean electronics group Samsung, for example, has rid itself of a reputation for poor quality, unreliability and low prices associated with new entrant producers from East Asia during the 1970s and 1980s through high levels of investment in new product ranges, quality and brand building and

promotion including high-profile celebrity endorsement and sponsorship deals (Wilmott 2007).

Commodity geographies in particular have recognised the wider webs of brands and branding agents in building upon Thrift's (2005) 'cultural circuit of capital' and moving beyond linear 'commodity chain' studies (Hudson 2005; Jackson 2002). The emphasis upon producer-consumer relations in shaping commodity value and meaning has been broadened more fully to incorporate circulation and regulation (Bridge and Smith 2003; Castree 2001; Smith *et al.* 2002; Watts 2005). Commodity 'following' work, for example, has enrolled a diverse mix of concepts, actors and processes to map 'a constellation of people, plants, bugs, diseases, recipes, politics, trade agreements, and histories, whose multiple, complex entanglements and disjunctures animate this "thing" and its travels' (Cook and Harrison 2007: 40). Other studies have interpreted spatial circuits of agents engaged in value production, enhancement, extraction, exchange and appropriation (Castree 2004; Henderson *et al.* 2002; Jackson 2002; Lee 2006; Smith *et al.* 2002; Watts 2005). While the exploration of the 'brand architectures' (Lewis, this volume, Chapter 16) or webs of agents involved in the brands and branding of spaces and places is beginning (see, for example, Therkelsen and Halkier, this volume, Chapter 12; Pike 2011a), this social construction by such agents underlines the importance of empirical study because it imparts contingency in brands and branding geographies, making them diverse and variable across time and space.

Uneven Development

The spatial associations of brands and branding matter because of their uneven geographies and their relationship with spatially uneven development through the orchestration and reinforcement of economic and social inequalities and the articulation of unequal and competitive socio-spatial relations and divisions of labour. Not only are the entanglements of brands and branding geographically differentiated but they intertwine with spatially uneven development because their underlying dynamic of differentiation is predicated on the search for, exploitation and (re) production of economic and social inequalities over space and through time. Producers, circulators, consumers and regulators with differing commercial and other interests work selectively to reveal and obscure the meaning and value of spatial associations in brands and branding (Pike 2011a). Accumulation and the differentiation imperatives of branding drive brand owners' market segmentation efforts in carving out, defending and exploiting profitable parts of goods and services markets. In spaces and places, local agents attempt to render their place distinctive relative

to other places in territorial competition for investment, jobs, residents and visitors (Turok 2009). As Richard Sennett (2006: 143) describes for goods and services, 'branding seeks to make a basic product sold globally seem distinctive, seeks to obscure homogeneity'. Brand owners, then, expend much time, effort and resources developing differentiation strategies. These include platform systems to integrate the infrastructures behind brands that generate unseen scale economies and cost savings while premium prices are maintained, cycles of fashion and season are introduced to quicken capital circulation and profitable premium niches are constructed to stimulate consumers to trade up to perhaps less affordable but higher margin offerings (Frank 2000).

For goods and services, branding seeks to de-stabilise existing markets and re-institutionalise them around new, strategically calculated brand definitions such that the 'aesthetic and cultural meanings of brands and sub-brands then become ways of segmenting markets by ability to make the premium payments required to possess the desired brand' (Hudson 2005: 69). Spatial manifestations of economic and social inequalities then fuel such market segmentation because 'Wide disparities between rich and poor . . . bring into being more luxurious types of goods than would otherwise exist' (Molotch 2002: 682). Brands' and branding's differentiation imperative (re)produces such inequalities and fosters social polarisation since 'The new poor, without the right labels and brands, are not just excluded but invisible' (Lawson 2006: 31). The identification, reflection and orchestration of socio-spatial disparities are central to brand owner strategy. The Global Brand Director for Mars sweets, for example, claims that 'the age of the average is dead' (Murray 1998: 140) and seeks sub-national 'pockets of affluence' as a branding priority. Geographically entangled brands and branding perpetuate uneven development by heightening the spatial and:

hierarchical division of labour . . . with design-intensive producers located at the top . . . and many of those actually involved in manufacturing the products or delivering the service at the bottom . . . only a few pennies of the price of a Starbucks cappuccino goes to pay for the labour of those who harvest and roast coffee beans, and not many more are paid to those who serve the drinks. The remainder accrues to those able to assert the value of their contribution to the brand in terms of creativity, product innovation or design activity. (Lury 2004: 37)

The unequal socio-spatial division of labour is (re)produced by the geographical organisation of brand owners' activities, seeking out particular places and labour pools that provide appropriate and cost-effective skills to support the web of producers, circulators, consumers and regulators of spatial circuits of value and meaning in brands and branding.

The geographical entanglements of brands and branding further contribute to uneven development through creating, embodying, reinforcing and even amplifying the competitive socio-spatial relations between spaces and places and sometimes intersecting branded goods and services markets. As the contributions in Part III, 'Brands and branding geographies – spaces and places' (this volume), demonstrate, especially recently competition in goods and services markets has connected and overlapped with the emergent industry of 'place branding' in the territorial competition for investment, jobs, residents and visitors (Greenberg 2008; Hannigan 2004; Hollands and Chatterton 2003; Julier 2005; Molotch 2005). This has occurred, for example, through brand owners' outsourcing and exploitation through playing off marginal labour pools against each other internationally for investments and contracts, competition between rival producers and circulators of competing brands from particular places, and regulatory agencies in specific jurisdictional territories seeking to define market standards capable of excluding specific goods or services brands. Indeed, it is now claimed that branding has extended beyond the world of goods and services to become 'one of the core strategic and commercial competences driving firms, clusters, regions, and nations in the contemporary economy' (Power and Hauge 2008: 3).

'Place branding' has explored the geographical extension of goods and services branding to spaces and places, building on studies of the 'commodification [of the] traditional multi-dimensional meanings of place' (Gold and Ward 1994: 295) that revealed its economic and social logics and the attempts of entrepreneurial institutions to transform the competitiveness of spaces in the 'place market' (see Harvey 1989; Kearns and Philo 1993). Some of this work tends toward the prescriptive and uncritically elides the 'national' and the 'brand' in seeking to conceptualise a notion of 'brand equity' for states. Van Ham (2001: 2, 6), for example, claims that:

brands and states often merge in the minds of the global consumer . . . strong brands are important in attracting foreign direct investment, recruiting the best and the brightest and wielding political influence . . . In this crowded arena, states that lack relevant brand equity will not survive. (See also Anholt 2002.)

More reflective research explores the overlap of place and goods/services marketing within streamlined national brands such as Brand NZ (Lewis, this volume, Chapter 16) and others including Brand Canada, Belgium's .be and Cool Britannia (Papadopoulos 2004; see also Jaffe and Nebenzahl 2001), and questions whether the mass public citizenry rather than elite 'ownership' of place renders product/service branding principles inappropriate (Papadopoulos and Heslop 2002). Recognising the

geographical entanglements in brands and branding illustrates the ways in which they can contribute to uneven development by (re)producing competitive socio-spatial relations and geographically differentiated outcomes between unequally endowed spaces and places.

This relationship between brands and branding geographies and uneven development is central to their politics. It connects to Harvey's (1990: 422, 432) call to 'get behind the veil, the fetishism of the market and the commodity, in order to tell the full story of social reproduction' by 'tracing back' the relationships between commodities and 'uneven geographical development'. The 'hidden life to commodities' can 'reveal profound insights into the entire edifice – the society, the culture, the political economy – of commodity producing systems' (Watts 2005: 533). Moreover, it can begin to make connections between the uneven development of brands and branding geographies in relation to goods and services *as well as* spaces and places (see Lewis, this volume, Chapter 16). The 'de-fetishisation' project has been subject to critique, however. Issues concern: the 'double fetish' of the thing-like quality of social relations embodied in commodities and the geographical imaginaries constructed by commercial interests (Cook and Crang 1996); the complexity of imaginative geographies in the social lives of commodities (Castree 2001); the privileging of academic over popular, increasingly sophisticated consumer knowledges (Jackson 1999); the imagining of alternative geographies by 'working with the fetish' (Bridge and Smith 2003: 262); and the questioning of commodity fetishism's relevance and whether 'reconnecting' will 'restore to view a previously hidden chain of commitments and responsibilities' (Barnett *et al.* 2005: 24).

Despite the prominence of brands and branding for goods, services, spaces and places, the explanations and politics of how their geographies are involved in any reconnecting (Hartwick 2000) or 'getting with' (Castree 2001: 1521) the commodity fetish remain underdeveloped. If 'an effect of branding is to distance the commodity from the social relations and conditions involved in its production by layering it with myths and symbols' (Edensor and Kothari 2006: 332), then conceiving of the geographical entanglements of brands and branding provides a 'non-abstract starting point' (Klein 2000: 356) to analyse their uneven development and politics. This is an important but difficult task because:

Branding in its current form takes this process [fetishization] a step further, promoting, in a sense, a fetishization of the fetish: that is, the commodification of the reified image of the commodity itself. Effectively, branding not only makes the 'mystical veil' which hides the social origins of the commodity that much thicker, but creates a veritable industry for the production and circulation of mystical veils, and devises methods for knitting these veils together to give the illusion of totality. (Greenberg 2008: 31)

In the uneven geographical development of branded commodities, spaces and places and their branding, Castree's (2001: 1520) 'important critical work' of de-fetishisation remains unfinished. In relation to commodities, piercing the mystical veils of brands and branding constructed by agents 'requires us to go beyond polarised debates about authenticity, "unveiling" the commodity fetish and revealing the exploitative social relations that are concealed beneath the commodity form' to instead articulate 'a more complex argument about the discursive process of appropriation . . . to understand the cultural processes through which meanings are manufactured *as much as* the political-economic processes through which alienation and exploitation occur' (Jackson *et al.* 2007: 328–329, emphasis added). The notion of geographical entanglements in brands and branding can contribute in several ways. First, it can capture the material *as well as* the discursive and the symbolic in the diversity and variety revealed in cultural economy approaches (e.g. Cook and Harrison 2003; Lewis, this volume, Chapter 16). Second, it can connect cultural construction with the systematising rationales and processes of contemporary capitalism (i.e. accumulation, commodification) emphasised (but not reducible to any singular outcome) by more culturally sensitive political economies (e.g. Castree 2001, 2004; Watts 2005). Third, it can begin to elucidate the connections between uneven development and its politics in the geographies of brands and branding of goods, services, spaces and places.

ORGANISATION OF THE BOOK

In situating brands and branding geographically in an international and multi-disciplinary frame, the contributions are organised into four connected parts. Part I, 'Introduction – conceptualising and theorising brands and branding geographies', introduces and reflects the current state of conceptual and theoretical approaches to brands and branding geographies from across key disciplines internationally. Reviewing the longstanding work in international marketing, Nicolas Papadopoulos demonstrates the centrality and growing importance of place. He distinguishes between place image and place branding to underline the increasing importance of affective factors associated with places, such as affinity or animosity, in strongly shaping buying behaviours. Second, he explains the pivotal role of the co-ordination of the different general, product, tourism, or other place images in place branding efforts as they interplay and influence different kinds of 'buyers' ranging from consumers and industrial purchasers to investors, tourists or students. From a sociological perspective, Celia Lury uses the notion of the performativity of the brand's interface to

explain the 'space-making' capacities of brands and branding. She suggests that brands occupy and organise 'multiple spaces' through acting as boundary objects, operating spatial boundaries rather than extending or deflecting them.

Part II, 'Brands and branding geographies – goods, services and knowledges', demonstrates the different conceptual approaches in drawing together empirical work on the brands and branding geographies of goods, services and – introducing a new analytical category – knowledges. Bringing novel insights into studying and branding food, Peter Jackson, Polly Russell and Neil Ward examine the 'manufacture of meaning' through branding and how its purpose for organisations is both external, for consumers in buying goods and services, and internal, in configuring and articulating the values and aspirations of staff. Using oral life history methodology, they argue that the process of brand development involves the interweaving of personal and corporate narratives and demonstrates the importance of space and place in the geographical and historical constitution of brands, articulated at a variety of spatial scales. Liz Moor focuses on 'place-affiliated' brands in consumption and addresses the extent to which consumers are involved in the making of such places. Drawing upon the examples of travel, politics and co-production in considering the place of brands, she demonstrates the importance of addressing the relative autonomy people experience in consumption in the context of the place-making power of larger-scale institutions such as brand owners and regulatory bodies such as the World Trade Organization. Atle Hauge makes a distinctive connection between innovation and branding in his study of the role of consumers in the development and marketing of high-specification sports equipment. He shows how the role of users in stimulating new ideas and shaping branding strategies is critical in explaining commercial performance because it links the technical and functional value of products with their immaterial and symbolic worth.

Ulrich Ermann explores the extent to which economic value has become detached from physical use value in the 'new brand economy' and its tendencies towards 'placelessness' in the 'spaces of brand economies'. Drawing upon a study of the launch of new fashion brands in post-socialist Bulgaria, he demonstrates the centrality of brands in constructing and performing discourses of economic modernisation and privileging the role of symbolic values in configuring consumers and raising their brand literacy in a transition economy. Bodo Kubartz makes fresh links between the role of proximity and distanciation in knowledge and knowing in the creation and branding of perfumes in the fragrance industry. He demonstrates how knowing takes place around brands and distinguishes an initial process of 'sensing a brand' (formulating and testing a concept for

a market niche) and 'branding a scent' (inter-relating the scent with all its other material and metaphysical product components).

Situating their analysis in the context of global circuits and cyclical clusters, Dominic Power and Johan Jansson explore the emergence and persistence of 'place-based brands', drawing from empirical work on Scandinavian design. Developing the notion of 'brand channels' that connect spatial circuits of value and meaning across and between geographical scales, they illustrate how the origins of products can be considered as powerful 'collective brands' built upon and fostered by symbiotic relationships between industries and places. In the context of the increasing commodification and branding of knowledge for marketing and sale through consultancy in business strategy and public policy, Ngai-Ling Sum develops the notion of the 'knowledge brand' to explain how 'competitiveness' is constructed and contextualised across different sites and scales. Exploring the example of the Harvard-Porterian brand of 'competitive advantage', she illustrates how this knowledge brand circulates and is reconstructed and negotiated in particular contexts by regional and local actors through sites and relays of translation and persuasion.

Part III, 'Brands and branding geographies – spaces and places', addresses the brands and branding geographies of spaces and places, focusing upon cities, localities, districts, neighbourhoods, nations and other constructed geographical imaginaries. Analysing the experience of Hoxton in London, Andrew Harris investigates the complex and geographically specific social and cultural worlds in which the 'brandsapes' of post-industrial city branding have been forged. He argues that a distinctive group of creative entrepreneurs and artists fashioned a successful brand but it proved unsustainable and ultimately undermined the basis of its own construction in the face of powerful gentrification and property development interests. In this way, he concludes that particular forms of urban branding promote new kinds of economic activities but, often unwittingly, construct new forms of spatial capture and control.

Anette Therkelsen and Henrik Halkier explore the politics of branding provincial cities by comparing the experiences of Aarhus and Aalborg in Denmark. Developing the concepts of inclusion, strategy and commitment to analyse the dynamics of agents involved in place branding projects, they demonstrate how inclusion does not necessarily secure long-term stakeholder commitment with or without the presence of shared strategy making. Guy Julier engages the intersection of design activism with place branding to review how it contests and disrupts its assumed and inherent spatialities. Through a critical analysis of the subversion and contestation of the branding of the city of Leeds in West Yorkshire, northern England, he challenges the dominant spatial ideology of cities and city branding

concerned with attractiveness and competition as post-industrial sites of consumption in neo-liberal global networks. Against this, he argues that financial meltdown and climate change have opened up a space for political engagement and dialogue about alternatives and change in the tempo and focus of local governance.

Drawing upon the experience of Val di Cornia in southern Tuscany, Italy, Cecilia Pasquinelli deploys the notion of relational branding to explore whether and how cooperation rather than competition amongst a spatially discontinuous network of places can constitute a brand. She develops a dynamic model of place brands capable of identifying the formative actors involved and concludes that this network brand has provided a viable rebranding strategy for a locality struggling with the effects of de-industrialisation. Gary Warnaby, David Bennison and Dominic Medway explore the construction of branded spaces in their examination of the rebranding of Hadrian's Wall as a Roman frontier spanning northern England. Demonstrating the fluid and evolving relationships between territorial and the more 'fuzzy' relational spatialities of the brand, they demonstrate how its meaning and extent have been negotiated by the actors involved and are likely to change over time.

Nick Lewis interprets the rise of nation branding as part of the wide-ranging and globalising strategies, rhetorics and practices deployed by nation states in the context of international inter-territorial competition. Engaging with the interconnecting architecture of various agents involved in branding New Zealand, he discerns a political project focused upon reinforcing the global orientation of the nation state in economic practice and social identity, and questions what and who are represented in the brand and to what ends. Reflecting from his position as a leading practitioner in the world of place branding, Simon Anholt addresses critically the idea of the 'nation brand' and situates it in global geopolitical context. Contrasting the experiences of South Korea and Italy, he emphasises the role of image, identity and reputation and how strategy, substance and symbolic actions are critical in their management.

Part IV, 'Conclusions', ends the collection. Focusing upon the nature of the current mature paradigm of city branding, Adam Arvidsson argues that the 'creative city' model centres upon a direct connection between the biopolitical interventions in individual and social practices and the financial valorisation of their results. Drawing upon international experiences, he explores how 'creative city' branding has been highly conducive to the gentrification strategies inflating inner city property and housing prices. He concludes by ruminating on the kinds of self-organisation and social production that may lie beyond the branded version of the 'creative city' and its branding. The final chapter draws together and reflects upon the

key contributions in the book to understanding the geographies of brands and branding, offers some reflections on methods and researching this topic, considers the contribution of geographical readings to the politics and limits of brands and branding and, finally, outlines potential future research directions. In sum, this collection intends to provide a focal point for the beginning of a fruitful and worthwhile engagement with the geographies of brands and branding in a multi-disciplinary and international context.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to all the authors for their contributions and commitments to this collection. Thanks also to Joan Fitzgerald at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, Northeastern University, and the Boston Public Library for the space to conclude it. The usual disclaimers apply.

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