Chapter 58

Challenges in Promoting Cities through Culture within the New Global Economy

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ABSTRACT

The deindustrialization period observed in the cities of North America, United Kingdom and Europe has led to changes in city economies. Urban industry was replaced by service sectors like marketing, finance and communication in this period. The new circumstances not only have changed the urban economy, but also images of the cities. The new image has raised the urban regeneration projects in partnership with municipalities and private organizations. The local governments and the private sectors have handled culture as a power to regenerate the images of cities. City branding based on culture is encouraged mostly by tourism. In this chapter, the role of culture in the city promoting strategies is evaluated through the analysis of cases. The stakeholders' approaches to the culture in the context of city branding strategies are handled and the challenges that the stakeholders have to overcome are listed.

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1990s, cities have been planning strategies to differentiate themselves from other cities and to promote their originality. As Ward (1998) emphasized, location choices has shifted from local to global level; as a result of this, places are being packaged and sold as products. In fact, marketing strategies for places involve many things from place logos to urban design, from trade fairs to cultural and sporting events (Tucker, 2008). Culture has become a power to regenerate the images of cities and to gain symbolic advantages over their rivals since the deindustrialization period (Bassett, Griffiths, Smith, 2003).

The deindustrialization period observed in the cities of North America, The United Kingdom and Europe has led to changes in city economies. That new circumstances not only have changed the urban economy but also changed the images of the cities. The new image has raised the urban regeneration

projects in partnership with municipalities and private organizations. Cities became more competitive and enterprising and local administrations developed governmental models in support of this new structure. The new government model covered the private sector and the concept of 'city marketing' was suggested in the 1970s in USA. This concept was adopted in Europe in the 1980s as 'urban entrepreneurship strategy' as a means to reverse the financial recession and urban deindustrialization (Paddison, 1993). Cities positioned and marketed themselves in order to achieve this vision's goals and draw visitors' attention (Ward, 2005). The new target of cities was to become brands and promote themselves to the world. Indeed, cities design their identities to promote themselves, much like the case seen in product marketing, and market themselves through these identities. Thus cities emphasize on certain qualities with supporting logos and promotional campaigns to differentiate themselves in a similar manner to product identities, brands, logos and promotional campaigns.

When the city branding studies are examined, it is seen that, for promoting the city, many campaigns are carried out by the stakeholders throughout the process. Such as, the Olympic Games are particular opportunities for cities to promote themselves. The city of Barcelona initiated a renovation process to aggrandize its image in the eyes of foreigners and improve the environment for residents before hosting the Olympics in 1992 (Miles, 2007). Similar to the example of Barcelona, the most effective factors to trigger urban promotion campaigns in cities such as Glasgow (Glasgow's Miles Better) and Manchester (Our City) were tourism incentives, hosting sports or cultural events (Ward, 2005). Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008, European Capital of Culture (ECoC) activities in Istanbul, Essen and Pecs in 2010 and 2010 World Design Capital activities in Seoul provided opportunities for these cities to publicize themselves on the international platform.

Beside those international campaigns, cities started to use their culture and heritage in the course of promoting strategies. To achieve culture and heritage based promoting strategies, the stakeholders began to reconstruct the city centers, build public places and organize festivals, international events, etc. Consequently, most of those activities were run by stakeholders who did not understand that the culture was not something that can be controlled by anyone (Kavaratzis, 2011). Designing and implementing a city branding strategy requires a complex set of initiatives, involving a broad number of public and private stakeholders gathered in a network (Zbuchea, 2014). Having successful results from a strategy that's been applied to a city does not necessarily mean that the same strategy will also be successful when applied to another city. Culture, assets and individuality on one hand; stakeholders, residents, private and public organizations and their expectations on the other hand vary from city to city. Therefore, it is obvious that there are many cases in city branding literature and there are also many challenges that the stakeholders have to overcome, such as;

- Implementing city branding strategies in parallel with urban policies.
- Stakeholders' agreement on issues of city branding strategies.
- Obtaining the confidence of the public about those strategies.
- Positioning the city with a simple idea, not using various features for the identity and image of the city.
- Conserving cultural heritage and promoting it significantly.
- Positioning city with a perceptible strategy to be an attractive tourism destination.
- Using value of design for creating city image.

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