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MSC IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING AND BRAND MANAGEMENT

City rebranding through co-creation with the residents

-

The case of Amsterdam

- Master Thesis -

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Abstract

Purpose: There has been a lot of research about city rebranding, however in the realm of tourists and businesses as stakeholders. The aim of this study is to investigate the involvement of residents in the city brand as part of rebranding. This is an explicit and explorative research in how residents co-create their city during Amsterdam's rebranding.

Materials and Methods: Data for this research were collected through two different methods. The primary research method was netnography so as to investigate the involvement as well as the attitudes and beliefs of the residents for the city rebranding efforts of the city's brand managers through the gathering and analysis of the different efforts found online. Moreover, two interviews were conducted with city brand managers and the sample was selected from the organization "Amsterdam Marketing". The purpose was to gain a deeper understanding on their incentives when they attempt to encompass the residents within city's rebranding.

Conclusions: It was concluded that residents are mostly willing to co-create with city brand managers and other parties when they are unhappy with the activities that try to shape the city brand. Hence, they attempt to express their negativity and dissatisfaction about their city. In order for them to participate more in the several activities, it is recommended that residents become more aware and active about what the city offers to them. The residents' place satisfaction model is found to connect with branding, hence the model was adapted to the found relations among the managers, the residents and other parties. This new model includes the concepts of co-creation and place brand satisfaction.

Key Words: Amsterdam, City Rebranding, Stakeholders, Residents, Amsterdam Marketing, Co-Creation, Place Satisfaction

Paper type: Master's thesis

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1. Introduction

The introduction gives a detailed description of the background of the research in question, where it also explains the case of Amsterdam. Next, the research problem focuses on the gap between managers and the stakeholder group of residents in city rebranding. Finally, the thesis outline discusses further how this thesis will look like and what will be discussed.

1.1 Background

Amsterdam saw a decrease in its position as an international center of business, culture and tourism as well as a decrease of residents in the beginning of 2000 (Nico Mulder, 22-04-2016; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007). By implementing a strategic marketing plan, the branding of Amsterdam improved (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007). The main goal was to attract more attention from international audiences like visitors and increase the position in international rankings, for example the European Cities Monitor, that includes the measurement about which cities are best to locate a business or which cities do the most to improve themselves (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007). Furthermore, Amsterdam wanted to change its illicit drug use and prostitution image (Jones & Kubacki, 2014). After studies conducted it also became clear that the city had to work on living conditions such as a live-able and residential city (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007). Amsterdam decided hence to distinguish itself and chose the following core values of creativity, innovation and spirit of commerce as they represent the “real” meaning of Amsterdam and values that had been there for centuries (Nico Mulder, 22-04-2016; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007). The brand and marketing of Amsterdam is currently within the hands of the company Amsterdam Marketing which is partner with the Municipality of Amsterdam (Nico Mulder, 22-04-2016). The slogan of Amsterdam is “**I Amsterdam**” and it is considered to be clear, short, powerful and easy to identify with (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007). Furthermore, the slogan had to encompass all stakeholders of Amsterdam (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007). The goal is to make people feel that they “are” Amsterdam (Nico Mulder, 22-04-2016). Hence, the idea is to make residents feel like cities ambassadors (Nico Mulder, 22-04-2016). Amsterdam’s marketing and branding efforts turned out to be highly effective. Amsterdam is chosen in this research, as Amsterdam’s focus was not only on the tourism sector but has a wider base of economic activities and target groups (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007). The projects and activities in the city are critically evaluated and contrasted to the theory of city branding and stakeholder involvement so as to get insights and valuable lessons from the experience of Amsterdam.

Branding is a concept which is proved to be of importance in today’s rapidly changing business world (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009). Kapferer (1992) mentions that branding is not only the product or service offered by a company, it is mostly the attributes that shape its identity as well as associations and linkages that consumer have in their minds (Keller, 1993; Keller & Lehmann, 2006). In this context, we know that businesses decide to spend noticeable amounts of their budget in branding so

that they strengthen their brand name. In this respect branding is not simply an economic activity, inspired by market considerations. Therefore, brands are not purely a source of differentiation but also of identification, continuity and collectively (Mommaas, 2002, p.34). Nevertheless, corporate and product branding are not the only aspects that can pop up when searching branding literature. More specifically, branding entails all kinds of communication and a projection of the branded object in order to increase its value and create a well-established message, resulting in fields such as personal branding, university branding and city branding that have been researched. In this research the field of city branding is of particular interest, especially in combination with stakeholders.

The city branding literature is considered to be still developing and it is mentioned by scholars that the theoretical clarification is limited (Hankinson, 2015; Green, Grace & Perkins, 2016; Kavaratzis, Warnaby & Ashworth, 2015). Furthermore, in the recent years the branding of places has gained popularity among place management officials (Kavaratzis, 2008; Zenker & Braun, 2015). Multiple scholars point out various reasons for cities to become more brand focused. Kavaratzis, Warnaby and Ashworth (2015, p.4) mention that an increase in mobility of people and capital and European integration “forces” cities to compete to ensure sustainability and economic development. According to Boisen, Terlouw and Gorp (2011, p. 136) the increase in city branding campaigns leads to “a greater awareness of perceived inter-urban competition among cities”. Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova (2014, p. 270) found that all places rebranding cases have a proactive trigger, which is “an identified opportunity to enhance the brand drives the rebranding initiative”. According to Hedberg (2001) many places have attempted to relaunch their branding in order to refresh their old-fashioned image. Mentioned by Kotler et al. (1999) rebranding is the response of a city to increased interurban competition. Here Amsterdam is a good example as their aims and reasons were to improve the positions in rankings. Furthermore, Amsterdam’s international image associated with the liberal attitude towards soft drugs and prostitution is now seen as inappropriate and it overshadowed the more desirable aspects of the city’s aspiration, thus the aim is to try to change the image (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007). Kavaratzis (2007) mentions that some practitioners underestimate city branding as it does not only encompass the creation of logos and advertising campaigns but a big variety of other activities. City branding needs to address the deep meanings in the city’s identity and local circumstances (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007, p.18) There is an interesting view that orders to complement the concept of corporate branding and specific methodologies developed in this field in place branding (Kavaratzis 2004, Kavaratzis 2007, p.702). Contradicting, Virgo and Chernatony (2006) suggest that city brands are more complex than product or service brands as they include a rather complicated relationship and interaction with the several stakeholders. Thus, place brand managers often disregard the complexity of place brands, as do their counterparts in the academic arena (Zenker & Braun, 2015, p.211). Zenker and Braun (2010, p.3) support that a place brand is “highly complex and consists of associations and general culture of the place’s stakeholders”. Hence, a

place brand is based on the perceptions of different customer groups (Zenker 2011; Zenker & Braun 2010). These perceptions can differ strongly given the various target groups perspectives and interests (e.g. residents, tourists, internal & external target groups). Furthermore, Boisen, Terlouw and Gorp (2011) mention that a diverse range of stakeholders attempt to manage the city brand for assorted reasons and individual interest, with their satisfaction constituting our main focus.

1.2 Research Problem

Interestingly, stakeholder engagement also seems to remain limited in city rebranding, especially with residents (Kavaratzis, 2012). This is fortified by Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2013, p.18) who mention that “residents are largely neglected by place branding practice and their priorities are often misunderstood, even though they are not passive beneficiaries but are active partners and co-producers of public goods, services and policies”. Thus, the residents are a very significant target group of place branding and by meaningful participation and consultation from their side, a more effective and sustainable place brand is produced and an “artificial” place brand is avoided (Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013). Kavaratzis (2012) and Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) state that a dialogue with stakeholders in place branding is extremely relevant. Hatch and Schultz (2009) mention the branding process should be a dialogue between stakeholders. This is strengthened by Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2013) who argue that stakeholders and more specifically, existing residents should be prioritized as they form the most prominent audience for place branding and this in order to avoid alienation between residents and the communicated place brand. Kavaratzis (2012) reinforces and shares this view as he points out that the residents’ role is still underestimated as most of place branding campaigns demonstrate a clear orientation to develop external investment and tourism. This does not stimulate authenticity, recognition and acceptance among the population towards the city brand (Zakarevičius & Lionikaitė, 2013). Internal stakeholders are not only an important group of place consumers (Braun, 2008; Zenker, Peterson & Aholt, 2013) but also a significant group of brand formers (Kavaratzis, 2008; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008; Zenker, Peterson & Anholt, 2013) and ambassadors (Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013; Zakarevičius & Lionikaitė, 2013). These are reasons for making them the most important ones, however still poorly known.

The meaning of cities to people can be developed independently of conscious attempts to adjust that meaning (Green, Grace & Perkins, 2016). It is said that cities grow organically and chaotically and thus city brand meaning does not arise from intentional city brand management but an array of other forces (Green, Grace & Perkins, 2016). Scholars more or less neglect that city brand primarily comprises of associations that marketers cannot control (Green, Grace & Perkins, 2016, p.12; Blichfeldt, 2005, p.395-396). Moreover, the progressive approach is the most recent view in the branding research and agrees and accepts that city brands are inherently uncontrollable and complex (Green, Grace & Perkins, 2016). The progressive approach introduces the co-creation branding

paradigm, which in city brand meaning supports that forces and factors other than city brand management contribute to city brand meaning (Green, Grace & Perkins, 2016). It is mentioned that residents deduce city brands exist irrespective of city brand management (Giovanardi, Lucarelli & Pasquinelli, 2013). Multiple scholars reinforce that cities have meaning and are shaped by culture or organically, before attempts are made to alter that meaning (Zavattaro, 2014; Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2015; Evans, 2015, p.146). The organic process that drives brand meaning and what cities fundamentally mean to people remains unclear.

Two concepts developed within the participatory branding approach are of particular relevance for our discussion on the role of residents: the first is the concept of brand co-creation (Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Miller, Merrilees & Yakimova, 2014), which stresses the fact that brands are not formed through traditional communications, but are co-created by a multitude of people who encounter and appropriate them. The second is the call for greater involvement of stakeholders in branding, which implies the need for empowerment and allowing them to participate freely in creating the brand, leading to stakeholder buy-in (Miller, Merrilees & Yakimova, 2014).

Likewise, the theory and practice of place branding show considerable shortcomings in the role of the residents in the place branding process. This is fortified by Green, Grace and Perkins (2016) who mention that there is a gap between the city branding research and practice. Hence, one of the aims of this study is to analyse the role of residents in relation to city's rebranding. Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2013, p. 25) argue that a form of place branding that integrates the views, oppositions and desires of residents is warranted. Besides, residents are important stakeholders in building the place brand, even if most studies found in the literature focused more on the tourist context. Therefore, there is a need to explore and explain the attitudes of residents towards the place brand and the effect co-creation has on the place brand. In the same sense, "place branding should be aware of potential conflicts between different groups of residents and also understand itself as a process of conflict management, with the aim of integrating as many residents as possible" (Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013, p.23). They mention that the biggest challenge for place brand managers is the role of residents as citizens as they could "make or break" the whole place branding effort.

This paper will discuss branding and more specifically city rebranding and the various perspectives of stakeholders and as such residents and city brand management. Theories can be developed or extended using case research (Merrilees & Miller, 2008). Therefore Amsterdam is used as a case study since this is a city that not only focused on businesses and tourism but also on residents. Through the case study of Amsterdam's rebranding, there will be an attempt to set up a resident place brand satisfaction model. This thesis will be written in the philosophies of city branding practice and city branding research that is the attempts to adjust what cities mean to people and the scholarly investigation that examines city branding in some way from a marketing or branding perspective (Green, Grace & Perkins, 2016). As a result, this thesis will make a valuable contribution to the current literature and

research and will establish a solid foundation for future research in the area of city branding. Taken all the before mentioned problems in consideration our research question will be:

How are the co-creation efforts which are created by city brand managers in the frame of rebranding perceived and complemented by residents in the case of Amsterdam?

In order to provide the answer, there will be use of two sub questions:

- 1. What are the co-creation efforts made by city brand managers for the residents, as part of the rebranding process?*
- 2. What are the attitudes and roles of residents in the place branding process?*

1.3 Thesis outline

To answer the research question and sub questions, this thesis will first build on a literature review, where the theory will lead from broad to more specific topics. Hence, first a rebranding review will discuss the theoretical foundations of the rebranding literature where the city branding concept will play a central role. Secondly, the stakeholders review will go deeper into stakeholders from a city brand point of view. Thirdly, residents and marketing managers will be discussed as separate groups of stakeholders in a city and the co-creation, place satisfaction and place attachment concepts will be explained. Later on, the methodology will elucidate the way the research was conducted, the philosophy, the research strategy, the semi-structured interviews and netnography and a rigor look regarding the research method is established in the methodological considerations part. The analysis consists of findings and discussion. Respectively, first the findings from the marketing managers through interviews will be given after which the findings from the residents' side through the netnography will be provided. In the discussion, the findings from the interviews, netnography and gathered literature are integrated and discussed. In this sense, the discussion attempts to first answer the sub-questions and then the research question. The conclusion will give a short recap on the final conclusion given in the discussion. The theoretical and managerial implications, possible future research and limitations of this research will be also argued.

2. Literature review

The literature review includes the theoretical concepts in relation to the focus of this thesis. The concepts are outlined in order from broader to more specific. Firstly, we start with the concept of rebranding and more specifically city rebranding. Secondly, stakeholders of cities are explained, elaborated and discussed, followed by a more thorough examination on the resident in city brands. Finally, the concept of co-creation between residents and other stakeholders in order to create together the city brand is introduced.

2.1 Rebranding Review

In this section, we elucidate rebranding and identify the theoretical foundation of city rebranding literature, after which we explain the key characteristics of the literature.

2.1.1 Corporate rebranding

Corporate branding caused a shift in the focus of the product brand to the organisation and the people behind it. Kavaratzis (2009, p.27) explains that “a corporate brand is the visual, verbal and behavioural expression of an organisation’s unique business model, which takes place through the company’s mission, core values, beliefs, communication, culture and overall design”. Nevertheless, quite often in several corporations a need for change is observed and hence efforts for rebranding are initiated. According to Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova (2004, p. 266), “corporate rebranding refers to the disjunction or change between an initially formulated corporate brand and a new formulation” and it is different than the corporate branding in the sense that the latter “can occur at any time” (Merrilees & Miller, 2008, p. 538). They continue that the idea behind rebranding is that all sectors or units of an organization need to be moved from one culture or mind-set to another. This change in mind-set can differ from cosmetic minor change to major radical change (Miller, Merrilees & Yakimova, 2014). A reason for rebranding or revitalising is usually under-performance of the company (Kapferer, 1997). Furthermore, corporate rebranding is used by organizations to enhance the brand relevance and to improve internal processes and make them more efficient (Miller, Merrilees & Yakimova, 2014). Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) argue that reasons for rebranding are wide-ranging and can be either external or internal. Corporate rebranding often requires a big investment and gives no guarantee to achieve success, thus making it risky (Miller, Merrilees & Yakimova, 2014). They argue that it is in this risk that it is critical to understand major enablers and barriers to corporate rebranding for efficient practice. Rebranding might also be caused because of intense competition within the field, hence strengthening the brand performance (Merrilees, 2005).

2.1.2 City rebranding

The city branding literature is considered to be still developing and it is mentioned by scholars that the theoretical clarification is limited (Hankinson, 2015; Green, Grace & Perkins, 2016; Kavaratzis, Warnaby & Ashworth, 2015a). In the literature, the concepts of city, place or destination branding are often intertwined as there is a lack of understanding about concepts and an inconsistency of terminology. Hanna and Rowley (2008) found that place branding has slightly changed orientation from tourism to business and marketing, where most place branding cases were done in countries (52.8%) and (32.6%) in cities. The term “destination” is found predominantly in the tourism literature (Hanna & Rowley, 2008). Therefore, Hanna and Rowley (2008) proposed to use “place” or “location” branding for towns and cities. Moreover, according to Merrilees, Miller and Herington (2009, p.362) “city branding is a sub-field of place branding and is about the marketing and branding of cities to residents, future residents and for businesses to invest in”. Hence, the terms place and city branding will be often used together, as these are the most common and specific ones. The literature on place and destination branding is extended across several academic domains including: geography, urban planning, tourism and retail marketing, however this paper will concentrate on city branding from the eyes of residents as main stakeholders.

Moreover, according to Kavaratzis (2009, p.27), “the most common application of place branding focuses on the visual elements of branding, such as a new logo, the incorporation of a new slogan, the design of advertising campaigns around those visual elements”. However, place or city branding consists of other fields as well. According to Kavaratzis (2009) there are evident similarities between corporate branding and city branding. Hankinson (2007, p. 251) provides five guiding principles on place brands detracted from corporate brands and argues that “there are sufficient similarities between those two types of brand to allow useful lessons to be drawn”. He argues that there is need for “strong, visionary leadership, a brand-oriented organisational culture, departmental co-ordination and process alignment, consistent communications across a wide range of stakeholders and strong compatible partnerships”. Apparently, our research examines those coherent efforts that take place, in the frame of city rebranding. Nevertheless, other scholars support that city brands are radically different from product brands (Kavaratzis, 2009). Virgo and Chernatony (2006) agree that city branding involves complexities beyond those of product and service branding, as stakeholders are diverse and the control over the city brand is limited because of its complexity and numerous target groups. Braun and Zenker (2010, p. 5) support that a place brand is “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”. Yet a place brand is based on the perceptions of different customer groups (Zenker, 2011; Braun & Zenker, 2010), with those perceptions challenging us for further development. These perceptions can differ strongly given the various target groups perspectives and interests. Boisen,

Terlouw and Gorp (2011) also mention that a diverse range of stakeholders attempt to manage the city brand for assorted reasons.

Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2007) explain the concepts of city marketing and city branding, where city marketing consists of everything that can be communicated about the city brand and thus by brand owner or agencies, with the brand being “not a message but the context in which messages are received” (Anholt, 2006, p.22). Hence, it is assumed that city branding is suggested to be an effective strategy to create the common ground that is necessary for marketing efforts. As mentioned before, a place is a complex entity and influenced by many different factors and audiences, perceived by different audiences in different contexts and thus difficult to define in terms of branding (Zakarevičius & Lionikaitė, 2013). The literature provides a wide range of approaches in this context. One approach is where place branding is understood as a process of place’s reputation through direct and indirect experience in the consumers’ mind (Zakarevičius & Lionikaitė, 2013). We hence aim at exploring those experiences as formed by residents. However, in place branding according to Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993) there are four key audiences or stakeholders; the visitors, residents and workers, businessman and exporters. According to Kavaratzis (2012) the role of internal audiences, which consists of the residents and workers is underestimated as most branding campaigns orientate to external investment and tourism. Moreover, Zakarevičius and Lionikaitė (2013) mention that those internal stakeholders are the most important group in the stakeholders of place branding. The growing literature and discussions around the internal stakeholders proves this fact (Zakarevičius & Lionikaitė, 2013), drawing our interest to narrow down residents’ part.

Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2007) imply that city branding is the increasing actions that take place in order to re-imagine or re-create the cities, implying that city branding can in a way describe city rebranding as well. An extended literature review done by Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova (2014) proves that all place rebranding cases have a proactive trigger. They imply that this proactive trigger is “an identified opportunity to enhance the brand which drives the rebranding initiative” (2014, p.270). Kavaratzis, Warnaby and Ashworth (2015a, p.4) and Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) mention that an increase in mobility of people and capital forces cities to compete to ensure sustainability and economic development. In the same context, Boisen, Terlouw and Gorp (2011, p. 136) as well as Kotler et al. (1999) support that the increase in city branding campaigns led to a greater awareness of perceived competition among cities. Additionally, place rebranding strategies often focus on regenerating cities or locales, such as in the case of New York, they re-built their reputation by the use of advertising like the ‘I love NY’ campaign used in the ‘70s (Hankinson, 2007), aiming to transform the place into a brand. Therefore, in this research the notions of city branding and rebranding are quite close and even overlapped. Nevertheless, we will mainly use the term city rebranding for a more accurate description of this case.

2.1.3 City brands as assets

Place brands and thus city brands as we mentioned hold a significant position within the area of branding. Therefore, several scholars have discussed them as assets (Hankinson 2015, p.13). Pike (2009, p.22) proposes that places in terms of brand equity present a gap as some measurement tools should be established, combining re-branding strategies. Relevant to this, Inch and Florek (2008) proposed that a model measuring the level of place satisfaction of citizens should be created. Accordingly, Sevin (2014, p.51) introduces the model Define-Measure-Visualize (DMV), according to which the place brand is identified, the relationships among the different stakeholders conceptualized and data are reported for usage by the different stakeholders (e.g. managers, decision-makers). This place performance measurement can be hard to define but it is of great importance (Hankinson, 2010). When it comes to brand architecture, Rainisto (2003, p.22) proposes that place brands can reinforce and boost the value of other associated brands, for instance other city brands that are less famous. Nonetheless, according to Hankinson (2010, p. 23) place brand orientation is another attribute of a place as an asset. For corporate brands, it is known that brand orientation includes “the processes of the organization that revolve around the creation, development and protection of brand identity...” (Urde, 1999, p.117). In the same context, for place brands Hankinson (2012) highlights that brand orientation can be achieved through organizations who involve stakeholders and partnerships, as in Amsterdam’s case study. Hankinson (2004) supports that some of the orientations of stakeholders can be clustered and partnerships can work effectively. Gaggiotti, Cheng and Yunak (2008) agree that partnerships can indeed work. From the above we assume that place brands can follow, just as corporate brands, a certain positioning within the place market. For the purpose of our research we will further investigate the role of residents as brand ambassadors and their influence on city’s positioning, as indicated by Zenker and Beckman (2013, p.21). Another point that should be mentioned about city brands as assets concerns the difference between place identity and place brand identity that some academics point out (Baxter, Kerr & Clarke, 2013, p.68). Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013, p.69) indicate that a place brand is “identity-driven by involving stakeholders in the creation of the identity of a city as well as ‘reflecting’ and ‘expressing’ this identity in communication”.

2.1.4 Relevant theoretical concepts

Green, Grace and Perkins (2016) set out the evolutionary path of city branding. They indicate that the most recent view in the branding research is the progressive approach. This approach accepts that “city brands are inherently uncontrollable and complex” (Green, Grace & Perkins, 2016, p.10). The progressive approach introduces the co-creation branding paradigm (Green, Grace & Perkins, 2016). This is reinforced by multiple scholars and hence seen by Green, Grace and Perkins (2016) as the current branding research era. For example, Giovanardi, Lucarelli and Pasquinelli (2013) highlight that various stakeholder groups interpret city brand meaning independently of international branding

efforts. Furthermore, Green, Grace and Perkins (2016) mention that it is argued by multiple scholars that cities have meaning and are shaped by culture and organically before attempts occur that alter that meaning (Zavattaro, 2014; Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2015; Evans, 2015, p.146).

The participatory city branding approach consists of co-creation and stakeholder involvement in branding (Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Miller, Merrilees & Yakimova, 2014). Co-creation with a special lens into residents discusses that brands are not formed through traditional communications but are co-created by a multitude of people who encounter and appropriate them (Miller, Merrilees & Yakimova, 2014). In this approach it is argued that there is the need for greater stakeholder involvement in branding, which implies the need for empowerment and allowing them to participate freely in creating the brand, leading to stakeholder buy-in (Miller, Merrilees & Yakimova, 2014).

2.2 Stakeholder Review

In this research, we do not merely attempt to analyze how city rebranding and co-creation can be achieved and the ways in which it results in the development of the city. By using Amsterdam's rebranding as a case study, there will be an effort to dig into different groups of people and specifically residents and city brand managers, by examining their perception of rebranding, their roles as well as their common and different points of view.

According to Merrilees, Muller and Herington (2012), it is very crucial to understand initially the different stakeholders in terms of their communication and interaction with the city as a brand. Therefore, we agree that in order to have a deeper reflection of the city as a brand, and since we want to investigate the effects of co-creation, stakeholders are an inseparable part of the analysis. Stakeholder management is discussed in the literature as the ways in which "stakeholders are identified, their interests are surfaced and interactions are managed" (Hanna & Rowley, 2011, p.465). City brand managers target groups of people so that they have their needs adapted to the most wanted form for the brand (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). The strong linkage between city as a brand and stakeholders will be thus further clarified. In today's competitive world with such a huge movement of people and goods in different cities and countries, rebranding can provide a place with an uplift of vital importance. A city can thus be transformed to a place where new resources are exploited, new activities are set up and people can enjoy commercial and economic growth (Hanna & Rowley, 2011).

2.2.1 Stakeholders' Identity

According to Fiedler and Kirchgeorg (2007, p. 178), the stakeholder categorization is based on "homogenous attributes within groups despite simultaneous heterogeneous attributes that differentiate groups". They continue that every group of people corresponds with some particular "positions, status and duties" (Fiedler & Kirchgeorg, 2007, p.178). In other words, this means that people who compose

one group have similar social behavior, expectations and roles. In the same context, we come across another definition for stakeholders, describing them as “all the people and organizations that are important for the functioning of the city” (Braun, 2008, p.49). Freeman (1984, p. 25) supports that stakeholders are “any group or individuals who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organization’s purpose”. Besides, stakeholders are the ones to reinforce the place brand (Sevin, 2014). Amongst the basic stakeholders of a city, in the first place the citizens and then industries are found, then governments and branding representatives (Ooi & Pedersen, 2010, p.317). Previous researches have concluded that there are many different and diverse stakeholders that are linked to a brand and interact with it. Fiedlet and Kirchgeorg (2007, p.178) highlight that stakeholders exist in a bigger diversity today, including “employees, business partners, special interest groups or journalists”.

Braun (2008) suggests a categorization of the groups of city stakeholders based on previous studies. Apparently, amongst the basic stakeholders are found citizens, businesses and tourists, whereas some export markets and investors can also be included.

<i>Categories</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>	<i>IV</i>
City’s Users (van den Berg et al., 1990; Ashworth and Voogd, 1990)	residents	companies	visitors	
Target Markets of Place Marketers (Kotler et al., 1993; 1999)	residents and employees	business and industry	visitors	export markets
Place Customers (Rainisto, 2003; Kotler et al., 2002)	new residents	producers of goods and services, corporate headquarters and regional offices	tourism and hospitality	Outside investment and export markets
General customer groups (Braun et al, 2003)	(potential) residents	(potential) companies	(potential) visitors	(potential) investors

Figure: Several stakeholder groups categorized by different studies

Source: Braun, 2008, p. 50

Herstein and Berger (2013) distinguish the audiences in the city branding process into four different groups, which include visitors, residents, business and export markets. Another group that has been studied as an important element in city branding is entrepreneurs. According to Kaya and Marangoz (2014), entrepreneurs’ attitude towards a city brand is influenced mostly by factors such as nature, business opportunities and governmental services. Similarly, Merrilees, Miller and Herington (2012) conclude that the way businesses face a city brand regarding the opportunities that it offers can define their whole attitude. In addition, Hankinson (2004, p.117) supports that media and communication is another important stakeholder, as they are essential for city rebranding. He continues that employees and residents are also consumers of the place brand and “part of the brand reality”. The focus of our thesis will be residents through a managerial perspective and thus city brand managers will also be discussed.

2.2.2 Stakeholder management

Stakeholder management or engagement is a very salient part in place branding and even a factor to distinguish the traditional branding from place branding (Hanna & Rowley, 2011). Hence, it is essential to our subject to delve into the ways residents' engagement can be achieved for Amsterdam's case. In this sense, Foley and Fahy (2004) agree that stakeholders can affect reasonably the brand, along with some extra external influences. Hankinson (2009) supports that stakeholder consultation is what can finally provide information about the place, the people living there and the overall image of it. Stakeholder management is also closely linked to the brand performance (Greenley & Foxall, 1997; Whysall, 2000). According to Baker (2007), even if the opinions of stakeholders differ, they should contribute to the place management and managers should take into account their voices, as indicated from our case as well. It will be investigated the point to which city brand managers are boosted or not by the residents and the various ways they are involved.

Since the groups of stakeholders vary, some of them can be considered to contribute in the creation of the brand whereas some of them seem less auxiliary (Hanna & Rowley, 2011). Furthermore, communication among stakeholders is discussed in many studies. For instance, it is surprisingly said that integrated communication among them would not work efficiently as stakeholders need different information (Bennett & Savani, 2003). Word of mouth (WOM) is associated with the communication that the various stakeholders have among them and it is a powerful tool, reflecting stakeholders' experience (Baker, 2007). This is the informal way that they share information in the way they perceive the brand and will be further investigated through Amsterdam's case. We are aware that the process of rebranding takes place so as to satisfy most of the parts of people that are found to be connected to a city. Actually, we assume that reflecting the negative attitudes of stakeholders is what is mostly needed for having the process of rebranding getting started, as it will be later proved. Indeed, according to Lewis (2000) in place rebranding there is an effort to disassociate any previous bad experience from the city's reputation such as crisis or other failures. As a result, an effective rebranding can attract visitors, investors, companies, residents and all the rest of stakeholders and revive their consideration for any particular city. Similarly, an effort of disassociation with previous negative experience has been done in the case of Amsterdam.

Hanna and Rowley (2011) have proposed a model which includes stakeholders as the crucial ingredient in the development of the Strategic Place Brand Management model (SPBM). More specifically, "stakeholder engagement is important in place branding, and arguably, the central significance of multiple stakeholders, some with their own brands, in the branding process has been recognized to be one of the distinguishing features of place branding as compared with mainstream branding" (Hanna & Rowley, 2011, p. 465). They also continue that the described process can take place without the responsible agencies, despite the fact that brand management and the positioning can

fail. This model reflects therefore the different causes due to which residents' involvement can shape the city as a brand.

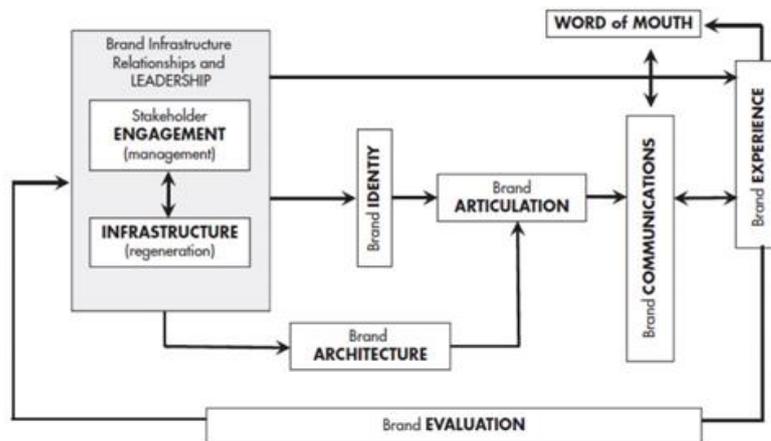


Figure: Strategic place brand management model
Source: Hanna & Rowley, 2011, p. 463

2.2.3 Differences among stakeholders

As it is easily understandable, there can pop up many differences and gaps among the different groups that are related to a city, as each one of them can show different opinions, demands and interests towards the city as brand. This dissertation aims partially to reflect how those differences are expressed by utilizing co-creation as a tool. For instance, when it comes to a place and its tourism, the different related stakeholders can have conflicting interests since some of them approve actions for touristic development whilst others want to preserve the place “untouched” (Ooi & Pedersen, 2010, p.317). As an example, Australia can be considered as a place with this kind of gap (Crockett & Wood, 2004). Accordingly, city branding can either create a destination for tourists or a brand for the residents so that they stay satisfied or even an attractive identity for the businesses (Merrilees et al., 2013, p.38). Merrilees, Miller and Herington (2009) propose that every stakeholder may have different needs concerning the city brand. In their research, they compare residents and businesses to understand their perception of the city brand. The results show that they have few differences concerning the factors that influence their attitude towards the city brand. Therefore, a different “filter” needs to be applied for every different group of stakeholder. In accordance, Bennett and Savani (2003) argue that the image created through rebranding can be in favor of one group of stakeholders and not for the rest. It can be thus difficult to end up in the creation of a new identity that satisfies everyone and is understandable and achievable by everyone. Another research that goes that far concerning the different attitudes of stakeholders has been conducted by Fiedler and Kirchengorg

(2007), testing which attributes can better distinguish the groups. They studied many different ones such as the importance of affective associations, the importance of cognitive associations, media exposure for customers, employees, shareholders and journalists of a corporate brand and conclude that it seems more reasonable to approach them separately. Our aim is to add to the literature the residents' perspective through a managerial look and through the concept of co-creation, which will be further explained. In the same context, in the literature about stakeholders, a crucial difference is detected between inhabitants and businesses, who have conflicting interests. More specifically, inhabitants may obviously desire to have the cultural elements of their city promoted through rebranding (Bolton, 1992) whereas organizations target to the business ones such as low cost, infrastructures etc. (McMorrow, 1999). A constant "warfare" between those two groups was studied by DETR (1998) in some English cities, where residents were mostly not welcoming to the changes as they did not favor them. The infrastructure provided to the different stakeholders should be, as mentioned before, in accordance to their demands and their differences should be taken into consideration (Balakrishnan, 2008; Gaggiotti, Cheng & Yunak, 2008). Nevertheless, this conflict can be fatal for the repositioning of a city as the vision may be unclear and strategy blurred. It is proposed by Bennett and Savani (2003) that a brand measurement system could be brought out to be a "savior" since it could verify whether the initial targets are implemented, for instance if the stakeholders perceive the new brand as it was initially planned. A similar model will be further discussed and analyzed later to a greater extent for our research.

On the other hand, in some of the previous studies it is supported that stakeholders must come to a consensus in order for the city branding to be successfully achieved. This means that businesses, residents, government etc must all agree on certain topics that concern rebranding, which is mostly efficient for topics that are not that deep but "when it is convenient" (Ooi & Pedersen, 2010, p.330). Murtagh, Graham and Shirlow (2008) argue however that the relationships of stakeholders are complex and consensus can be achieved only within some limits. Besides, Merrilees, Miller and Herington (2009) argue that the different stakeholders do not have to be equal, just to be all taken into consideration. In this sense, Hankinson (2004) concludes that stakeholders should share a common vision as well. In the concept of co-creation and brand development caused by residents, we assume that a common vision would work efficiently by reinforcing the smoother achievement of the targets.

2.2.4 Place Brand identity as created by stakeholders

Improving the identity of the brand can actually stand for developing or replacing the engaging process of the stakeholders (Hanna & Rowley, 2011), which goes under the supervision of brand management to achieve that (Rainisto, 2003). Place brand identity encompasses also "the distinctive characteristics that the stakeholders ascribe to a place, provides a framework for overall coherence, and monitors means of expression – hence its influence on articulation" (Hanna & Rowley, 2011, pp.

468). According to Hankinson (2004) brands are actually a “relationship”, which does not only include customers (possibly inhabitants in our case) but also all the stakeholders we have already analyzed. Stakeholders offer a valuable contribution to the brand identity through the various processes such as conflicts, discussions and in general this interaction which can shape the brand (Kasabov & Sundaram, 2013). Accordingly, Rainisto (2003) argues that all players should be included in the formation of a vision for the city. He also continues that target groups should understand the identity of the place, which will be differentiated from other places. In the same context, during the creation of their unique attribute, places develop both tangible and intangible aspects. More specifically, “urban development, monuments, memorials, religious buildings, buildings associated with production, cultural landscapes etc.” are considered as the main tangible contribution in the identity of a place, whilst “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, legends etc.” the intangible ones (Mitsche et al., 2013, p.69). As it is clear, the main stakeholders that are found to be connected with the creation of those components are advertisers, tourism policy makers and marketers (Kavoura, 2014, p. 33). The identity of the place is further strengthened by tourists if they feel a “cultural familiarity” (Mitsche et al., 2013: 69). Consequently, “internal and external stakeholders, residents, the local but also the central state, the private sector but also the point of view” are the cornerstones in the process of a city acquiring its own identity (Kavoura, 2014, p.33).

Furthermore, place identity is closely linked to the fact that people have the feeling of belonging there, they coexist with others, without having necessarily the residential status (Hummon, 1986, p.4, p.6; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001, p.274; Anderson, 1991). Nevertheless, networking is considered to have a vital role as well, since it can operate internationally (Kavoura, 2014). In her conclusions, Kavoura (2014) insists that place identity is in need of efficient marketing where visitors will be taken into consideration. When it comes to the difference between place identity and place image in relation to stakeholders, the first one is to create a common perception of the place whilst the second one is how people perceive its communication (Anholt, 2007; Keller, 1993). This is not a fixed process but interaction takes place between external and internal stakeholders (Anton & Lawrence, 2014; Lindstedt, 2011). For Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) “mirroring” means reflecting not only the point of view of external stakeholders but also of the internal ones. They also conclude that the investment into this process should be dedicated to the dialogue among stakeholders instead of logos, slogans etc.. Zavattaro (2015) argues that stakeholders should be contained in the formation of the brand identity of a place.

2.3 Residents in city rebranding

2.3.1 Residents as stakeholders

Braun and Zenker (2012) reveal that through their personal experience they have noticed residents being neglected during city branding. Notwithstanding, they are the ones to fulfill the “brand promise” (Kerr & Oliver, 2015). According to Ashworth (2009), it is people “who make sense of a place and construct their own understandings of it in their minds through contact points”, which are basically their experiences, different ways of presentation such as films, media etc. and involvement within place design. Kerr and Oliver (2015, p.66) support that “residents are the identity holders of a place” and also that “those identities need to be considered within place branding strategies”. In cases where the marketing of a city is not well structured, residents are the ones to forward the city brand (Warnaby et al., 2002). Our aim is to verify whether residents’ reactions are respective to the city brand managers’ applied strategies and the point to which they find them in accordance.

2.3.2 City brand managers

When we refer to city brand managers as stakeholders we mean the group that basically takes the initiative to rebrand a city. According to Stubbs and Warnaby (2015) the responsible for managing a city’s brand name can be promotion agencies and consultancies that have to create a long-term strategy. They continue that the danger that is often included nonetheless is that they neglect the complexity of the place brand and do not achieve to create those deep bonds with residents. Apparently, this group has to be in accordance with the demands and needs of municipality/politicians, as they may sometimes want to insist on more touristic aspect of rebranding instead of placing on the first place the residents (Stubbs & Warnaby, 2015). This is a relationship that will be examined as part of co-creation efforts.

2.3.3 Actions to include stakeholders in city rebranding

In our case study, Amsterdam is on our focus and the rebranding process it has followed some years ago. In literature it is said that one point of its rebranding strategy was to become a place for older people that would love to experience the “City on the Water”, instead of the liberal one offering sex and drugs tourism (Dahles, 1998; Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990). More generally, cities increase the events and the activities that happen around, nightlife and cultural events in order to attract residents (Ooi & Pedersen, 2010, p.317). The importance of film festivals is also highlighted as an example of strong rebranding activity for stakeholders. Accordingly, Herstein and Berger (2013) discuss the great contribution of sport events for residents of the city as part of rebranding, for the country’s citizens, media, investors and people all over the world that become fans and want to participate. Apparently, Olympic Games are one of the most pivotal events that can contribute in city’s repositioning. In

Hankinson's study (2004) the examples of Manchester, Sydney and Barcelona are referred as successfully rebranded cities that hosted sports events and managed well with the communication towards their main stakeholders. In Stockholm for instance, residents were perceived to be indifferent about their city brand and then the Stockholm Hall of Fame was introduced to cheer them up (Kavaratzis, Warnaby and Ashworth, 2015a). Fiedler and Kirchgeorg (2007) suggest that each stakeholder group can be individually targeted when it comes to positioning of a brand, such as a city brand. Thus, it is concluded that a different approach and activities in rebranding should take place for the different stakeholders. Accordingly, Morsing and Kristensen (2001) suggest that different stakeholders have different interpretations for the city brand, fact that can benefit the brand and the purposes around it. For example, citizens will consider a city as the place where they live; businesses as the place to do business and all of those categorizations make use of 'filters' to distinguish somehow the city from their own perspectives. Interestingly, city branding is not only for tourists but also to persuade and attract businesses and investments (Ooi & Pedersen, 2010). Hence, an interesting discussion will show the "contradiction" between those activities and specifically the co-creative ones, in the way they influence residents.

2.3.4 The Place Satisfaction Model

As mentioned before, Zenker, Petersen and Aholt (2013) argue that residents are an important stakeholder group as they shape the city brand with their characteristics and their behaviour. Furthermore, it was argued that different stakeholders have different opinions. In this sense it is argued that residents will consider a city as the place where they live based on their satisfaction with this city (Zenker, Petersen & Aholt, 2014). Insch and Florek (2008) mention that city managers should try to satisfy the residents as the interactions they have are uncontrollable. Otherwise they could potentially harm the brand image of the city through negative word of mouth, especially towards visitors (Insch & Florek, 2008). Zenker, Petersen and Aholt (2013) furthermore mention that this reasoning leads to the importance to consider citizen satisfaction, which is a complicated and comprehensive concept. However Insch and Florek (2008) try to explain it. They identify satisfaction as closely related to happiness and well-being. They mention that there is a strong connection between place satisfaction and attachment (Insch & Zenker, 2008). Place attachment describes the "affective bond between a person and a particular place" (Zenker & Rütter, 2014, p.12). Place attachment is considered to consist of two elements, a social one and a physical one (Zenker & Rütter, 2014). Respectively, the social one is about social bonds to other people that live in the place whilst the physical element is about the environmental features of the place (Zenker & Rütter, 2014). According to Insch and Florek (2008) attachment is understood as loyalty in marketing terminology. They mention that the aim of places should not be financial success but the welfare and satisfaction of the residents (Insch & Florek, 2008, p.146). Hence, they come with the following model of antecedents and consequences of city residents place satisfaction.

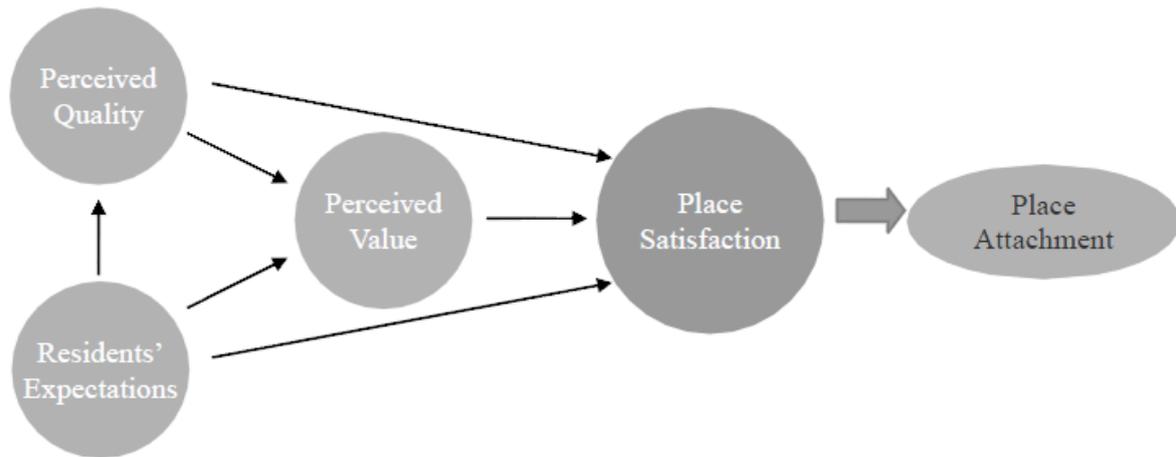


Figure: the place satisfaction model (Insch & Florek, 2008, p.145).

Insch and Florek (2008, p.146) say that residents' expectations of social and physical resources that were mentioned in the explanation of place attachment - such as respectively the social bonds and environmental features - establish the benchmark against which the residents evaluate the quality of these aspects and shape their perceptions of the value for money. They argue that place satisfaction is thus subject to and influenced by the residents' expectations and perceptions of quality and value of money. Furthermore Zenker, Petersen and Aholt (2013) present the Citizen Satisfaction Index (CSI), projecting the satisfaction of citizens on a four factor model. They argue that urbanity and diversity, nature and recreation, job opportunities and cost efficiency are all factors that could be use in comparative research (Zenker, Petersen and Aholt, 2013, p.156). Thus, this measures the satisfaction of residents. Besides, the influence and far reaching effect the efforts of brand managers might have on these models remain unclear.

2.3.5 The concept of co-creation

Our aim is to discuss the role of residents through a managerial perspective. When researching therefore this area, we found out that the concept of co-creation is an upcoming notion within city branding research. In general, co-creation is the result of involvement of the customer with the organization and the creation of value (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000). In the same sense, the notion of stakeholder buy-in the place brand emerges and includes this engagement and interaction (Hanna & Rowley, 2015). More specifically, according to Kerr and Oliver (2015, p.67), "co-creation or co-production of a place is the process in which residents are producers and consumers of identity". Ashworth (1993) proposes that the primary contribution during the formation of a city brand stems from consumers, as they set up the services, infrastructures etc. that they need for themselves. In the same sense, Warnaby (2009) supports that customers, -who we assume to be residents in our case- are the basic co-creator of value of the place brand. A place is a "lived concept" as it is inhabited and people live their experiences in this place (Cresswell & Hoskin, 2008, p.394). The subject of our thesis

is in accordance with Cresswell's (2004, p.37) opinion, indicating that "places are constructed by people doing things and in this sense are never 'finished' but are constantly being performed". In the same context, Kavaratzis, Warnaby and Ashworth (2015a) highlight that places' identities are basically the translation that people living there give to culture and to every natural and human-made attribute, insisting on the interaction between them. But what can be the deeper trigger why people get so involved with the branding or rebranding of their city, besides living there? The answer is that place attachment creates emotional bonds, experiences and meanings which are all translated into physical features (Ryden, 1993). Language for instance is proved to be a strong bond between residents and the place as it creates narratives through which they express themselves, describe their experience and thus contribute in the formation of the place brand in their way (Stokowski, 2002). Of essential importance nowadays is also considered to be the co-creation obtained through social media (Kavaratzis, Warnaby and Ashworth 2015a). Place brands are quite complicated and thus they permit a noticeable interaction and engagement which leads to place marketing (Fouts, 2010; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). This way of co-creation is developed based on shared stories through social media which are engaging and appealing (Anholt, 2007). Online engagement between locals and "diaspora" for instance is a great example about how a city brand can be online co-created (Govers & Go, 2009). Accordingly, place brand websites create online experiences (Alonso & Bea, 2012) which are consumer-to-consumer and provide more and more direct engagement (Kavaratzis, 2012). Kavaratzis, Warnaby and Ashworth (2015a, p.43) have drawn the conclusion that "a place product is co-created through the actions of those within and around it" and thus it is necessary for us to investigate those actions.

3. Methodology

This section provides a detailed explanation of the methodology used in this thesis. Firstly, we elaborate on research philosophies and argue which stance is taken in this thesis. Secondly, the research approach together with the research design that stems from the research philosophy are selected and explained. Later on, the sampling method explains the selected interviewees for the semi-structured interviews and the online sources used for netnography. Next, the data collection describes for both the semi-structured interviews and netnography separately how the data was collected and executed. Furthermore, the data analysis explains how the data was analyzed. The last part will cover methodological considerations such as reliability, validity, generalizability, political, ethical and limitations of the method.

3.1 Research Philosophy

To understand the epistemological and ontological foundations, paradigms have been created (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). These views explore assumptions made about the nature of the social world and how they can be studied (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.26). A paradigm is "a set of basic beliefs that deals with ultimate's or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual's place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). The object of study, how the research should be done and how results should be interpreted, everything follows on the choice of paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, it is important to consider carefully in which paradigm the research is framed. Thus, the research philosophy that is chosen for our thesis strengthens the research strategy and provides understanding for our research design.

Ontology refers to the form and nature of reality and what can be known about it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For researchers this means that knowledge is considered to be independent of the researcher itself or whether the researcher participates in the construction of that reality (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Moreover, Bryman and Bell (2011, p.20) note that ontology's orientation starts with "whether social entities should be considered as objective or subjective, whether they have a reality external to social actors and if they should be considered as social constructions built from the perceptions and actions of social actors". Respectively, ontology is defined by objectivism and constructionism (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.20). The position that applies to this research is the relativism and more specifically the constructionists' ontological stance. Hence, we view the social entities as subjective. Bryman and Bell (2011, p.22), explain that in constructionism social phenomena and their meaning are differently interpreted by different individuals. So individuals' expressions and meanings are viewed as self-interpretations of universal viewpoints that are adapted to the individuals'

unique life context (Thompson, Pollio & Locander, 1994). Reality is seen as something created through social interactions between individuals in a contextual manner (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.22). Thus, there is always a specific version represented of social reality rather than one that is definitive. Instead of a social construct being seen as a reality, it can be taken to be an emergent reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction (Bryman & Bell, 2011). We feel obliged to take a constructionist ontological stance, as this is appropriate to create an understanding of the residents' and marketing managers' subjective perceptions of the city brand and their various incentives for co-creation attempts between them.

Epistemology is concerned with the question of what is regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.15). Hence, it can be described as the process through which one gains knowledge. The choice of epistemological position influences the way how methods and their results are interpreted (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A key issue in epistemological assumptions is whether the social world should be studied according to the same principles, procedures and ethos as the natural science (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.15). The two contrasting positions distinguished are positivism and interpretivism (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Interpretivists' view is that social science is fundamentally different from natural sciences (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Interpretivism is characterized as the *Verstehen* tradition in social science (Weber, Schwandt, 2000), hence it is not about explaining but about understanding. We were oriented towards an interpretivism epistemological stance as is mostly concerned with "understanding human behavior" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.16), since the co-creation as a concept examines purely the human attitude and participation. Furthermore, to understand a particular social action like the emotions and attitudes towards rebranding, the researcher must grasp the meanings that constitute the action (Schwandt, 2000). Interpretivism also describes in depth "the subjective meaning of social actions" (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 19). In other words, interpretivism makes it possible to understand the subjective meaning of action, but yet to do so in an objective manner (Schwandt, 2000). This stance facilitated the understanding of how and why city branding is perceived, allowed for complexity of contextual factors and gave a better understanding of the social processes occurring (Schwandt, 2000). Accordingly, interpretivism is a perfect way to understand the interpretations, meanings, motivations and values individuals have about city rebranding action (Schwandt, 2000). Furthermore, taking an interpretative stance can mean that "the researcher may come up with surprising findings or at least findings that appear surprising if a largely external stance is taken, that is a particular social context being studied", fact that seems to be in accordance with some of the findings that we found (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.19).

An interpretative paradigm dominantly operates under qualitative methods (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.27). This paradigm is not about finding facts but different meanings and feeling about experiences (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p.64). Our research aims to seek motivations, attitudes,

beliefs, behavior and a general understanding of these. Hence, based on those incentives, the philosophical stance and intended research complement each other.

3.2 Research Strategy

The methods and research design developed in this thesis are subject to the chosen paradigm. Besides, one definition of qualitative research is ‘a research paradigm which emphasized inductive, interpretive methods applied to the everyday world which is seen as subjective and socially created’ (Hatch, 2002, p.6). Therefore in this thesis taking ontological and epistemological assumptions into account, the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm has been chosen. A qualitative research approach is used as this will match together with the interpretivist/constructivist approach and the ontological/epistemological assumptions that accompany it (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012) qualitative approach is associated to interpretivism as it can contribute in the creation of new theories and interpret people’s attitudes. Whilst quantitative research demands collecting numerical data and analyzing them by using scales and frequency for example, qualitative research methods involve the collection and analysis of data obtained from observation, interviews, taped information, documents etc. and by interpreting opinions, behaviors, facts etc. (Neville, 2007). As a result, city rebranding would unavoidably include the examination of actions of different groups (stakeholders), qualitative was proved to be the proper one. Understanding the various ways of involvement that residents and city brand managers have within the concept of city rebranding led us applying a qualitative approach as various perspectives of those groups will be reflected and analyzed.

After having chosen a qualitative approach, the next step is to narrow down on the research design in order to “answer the research questions and specify the sources we intend to collect the data” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p.136-137). Thus, we will discuss more thoroughly an ‘example’ of a rebranded city in the past and therefore analyze a case study. Case studies can be the means through which several qualitative methods can be combined (Knights & McCabe, 1997). Hence, in this thesis a case study will be used, whereas netnography and interviews will be combined later. The case study of Amsterdam was identified to be one of the most representative examples in city rebranding as it was quite discussed in the literature and as it can challenge the existing literature (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Bryman and Bell (2011) argue that since in qualitative strategy one can choose from more than one research designs (e.g. case study, longitudinal design, and comparative studies). However, they mention that it can be quiet hard to find the common place among all of them under the term qualitative research. In qualitative strategy, theory is expected to be an outcome and not pre-existing the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.389). According to Bryman and Bell (2011) many qualitative researches test theories in order to come up with conclusions but what mostly happens is the creation of new ones. In our case, an iterative approach will be followed, as the

established theory will be used on an ongoing basis, by applying it to our case study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The theory used and adapted in our case is reflected on a model, the Place Satisfaction Model, which through our iterative approach we elaborated on and made it suitable for our findings.

As it is already mentioned, a case study is the research design that will be used for this research and more specifically the city of Amsterdam in the process of its rebranding. Yin (2002, p.119) supports that case studies should be analyzed by exploiting as basis a well-structured plan that would include the questions to be answered, links between data and cases under investigation and the procedures through which we will come up to conclusions. In accordance to this perspective, Neville (2007, p.8) proposes that case studies can be explanatory and “use theories as a basis for understanding and explaining practices or procedures”. A case study can also represent an event, a location, a person or an organization but in many cases it is linked to a geographical location (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.59-60), as in this case. The chosen case study will be an analysis of the city of Amsterdam as formed after a reputation crisis that it has already faced.

Within this iterative approach, several theories will be used in order to further expand on them and test their application to our case study. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) when conducting explanatory researches, they have to be flexible and able to redirect if needed. This flexibility is part of this thesis as it is based on the findings of our case study and the iterative approach. The “causal relationships” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p.140) between the different variables is the definition for explanatory research that fits best our thesis, as we notice this kind of relationship between city brand managers and residents, which is interrelated. Lee, Collier and Cullen (2007, p.170) also highlight that the explanatory case “seeks to derive a detailed understanding of a particular phenomenon where the case is not seen as ancillary to more quantitative methods”.

3.3 Research Method

Ethnography is a strong form of constructionism as the researcher “immerses himself in a setting and becomes part of the group under study in order to understand the meanings and significances that people give to their behavior and of others” (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p.112). Netnography is internet and technologically networked ethnography (Kozinets, 2010). The term netnography is a mix of the words “internet” and “ethnography” and was introduced by Robert Kozinets. The methodology employed in this research is of relative newness (Quinton & Harridge-March, 2010). A definition of “netnography” states that it is “a qualitative, interpretive research methodology and adapts the traditional research techniques of anthropology to the study of online cultures and communities formed through Social Networks” (Jupp, 2006, p.193). Justification for the use of internet as data collection tool has been outlined by Garton et al. (1999), Evans et al. (2001) and Nancarrow et al. (2001). The foundation of netnography lies in the value of taking a cultural approach

(Kozinet, 2015). Thus, netnography is a branch of ethnography and analyses the free behavior of individuals on the internet to provide useful insights. Moreover, netnography is the name “given to a specific set of related data collection, analysis, ethical and representational research practices, where a significant amount of the data collected and participant-observational research conducted originates in and manifests through the data shared freely on the Internet, including mobile applications” (Kozinets, 2015). In this thesis, the behavioral part concerns residents and more specifically Amsterdam’s residents. Since we want to investigate their ability and willingness to participate in city’s rebranding activities, we assumed that it can be reflected on the several activities that are offered by city managers to them and can be found online.

Netnography, in our own perception, investigates computer-mediated communications on the research topic of interest. Therefore, in this dissertation, we used the communication used for every co-creation activity to conclude where people participate, where not, where they hesitate and so on. Kozinets (2002) mentions that consumers increasingly turn to online communities, as they use online formats to share ideas, build communities and contact fellow consumers (Kozinets, 2002; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). It is through the online communities that every opportunity for them to participate and be part of their city is publicized and spread around. In the same sense, netnography has been developed in the area of marketing and consumer research and applies an interdisciplinary field that is open to the rapid development and adoption of new techniques. Social scientists have reached the conclusion that to understand the most important facets of social and cultural life the internet needs to be incorporated into their studies (Kozinets, 2010). More specifically for Amsterdam’s case, we agree with this opinion since almost all the activities designed for “residential use” are communicated online. In present world, the use of technology is to communicate, to commune, to socialize, to express and to understand (Kozinets, 2010).

Kozinets (2010) mentions that netnography examines groupings, gatherings or collections of people, represented by residents in this research. The element of communication is necessary for netnography. When the city brand managers decide upon the activities that bring residents closer to their city, we know in advance that they have to be well communicated and thus make use of the several networks. All of these tools comprise useful data for netnography (Kozinets, 2010). He also argues that when netnography is chosen for the study, researchers should look for particular locations or communities which offer a context that is more directly relevant to the study’s research orientation, topic, or question (Kozinets, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, netnography is open to rapid changes and the emergent of new techniques. In this sense, Kozinets (2015) argues that the social media space has become an important part of netnography. He mentions that the social media space is complex and varied, with sites that range from the social to the informational, specific site to specific purposes and interest and particular sites targeted to the needs of particular groups and also targeted to idiosyncratic needs. Through social

media, we can learn about the phenomenon of everyday social behavior online. Social media as part of our investigation, tested the involvement residents have and the point to which they express their attitude and beliefs in public.

There are only a few specific, procedural guidelines to take a researcher through the specific steps necessary to conduct ethnography of an online community and to present their work. Having a set of common standards will confer stability, consistency and legitimacy (Kozinets, 2010). Netnography follows in the six steps of ethnography; research planning, entrée, data collection, interpretation, ensuring ethical standards and research representation (Kozinets, 2006; Kozinets, 2015). Kozinets (2010) argues that ethnography and netnography could be ‘pure’ or overlap in some sense. It uses largely textual data collected from field notes and artefacts of the community. In the case of online communities this may be postings by contributors (Kozinets, 1998). Since netnography represents all the symbols and communications of people using the Internet and leaves us interpreting them (Kozinets, 2010), in the netnography we conducted we collected facts as part of the human behavior and indirect communication.

3.4 Data Collection

As we have already mentioned, the research method in which we approach this thesis is netnography, thus when collecting data we basically addressed to online resources. Notwithstanding, interviews were also conducted throughout the data collection process in combination to netnography in order to provide a more spherical view from city brand managers. Interviews are used in combination with the netnography since “they can serve as auxiliary method” (Kvale, 2007, p.46) and as they can also assist in the examination of different aspects of online communities (Kozinets, 2010). Most importantly though, the interpretivist paradigm in which we shape this thesis uses qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and ethnographic observation as all of them try to interpret subjective beliefs and opinions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Besides, our target is in accordance with the perception that the interpretive social research examines how people perceive what happens around them and react, which is translated into a) how residents participate in their city’s activities when it changes image and b) how city brand managers decide upon the rebranding process.

3.4.1 Netnography

Data when conducting netnography can take three forms: (1) archival data (2) elicited data and (3) fieldnote data (Kozinets, 2015). According to Kozinets (2015) archival data comprises any data that researcher gathers from social media communities that does not entail their involvement in creating the data and this type of data can serve as an historic record and a cultural baseline; elicited data is co-created through personal interactions between the netnographic research and relevant community

members and could result from the researcher simply participating in ongoing discussions, taking part in or initiating conversations or from exchanges that are more interrogatory in nature; fieldnote data are the ones that the researcher notes as field notes. In this specific case, the data that are gathered and analysed are of the archived form, since the researchers were not involved in the creation of data. Initially, the target set was gathering data that would have been elicited and thus we would have interacted with the online communities by finding the ones where residents of Amsterdam would comment and express their satisfaction, dissatisfaction and opinions about city's rebranding and image the last years. Nevertheless, we ended up collecting archival data since it was noticed that people do not actually prefer to comment about their city of residence on various communities and especially about its branding but instead comments were only a product of tourists. Thus, we have assumed that the journalist of all the data we provide represents in a way the average resident, showing even indirectly a comment or perception. Therefore, data were collected exclusively through observation among various websites and communities.

Apparently, since we conducted netnography, the tool used for data collection was internet. The massive use of the internet and the development of online communities, interactive platforms and toolkits offer the potential to co-create with a large number of customers or consumers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Piller & Walcher, 2006; Füller, 2010). Howard Rheingold (1993, p.5) defines a "virtual community" as "social aggregations that emerge from the net when enough people carry on... public discussion long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace". People in online communities "exchange pleasantries and argue, engage in intellectual discourse, conduct commerce, exchange knowledge, share emotional support, make plans, brainstorm, gossip, feud, fall in love, find friends and lose them, play games, flirt, create a little high art and a lot of idle talk" (Rheingold, 1993, p.3). In addition, an online community can provide an environment through which someone can express himself, learn more and develop relationships with others (Quinton & Harridge-March, 2010, p.61). Among the members of online communities the key that is shared is 'culture' which is a complicated word. Over time culture becomes more material and practical, such as the continuity of behavior, values, and symbol systems. Lévy's (2001, p. xvi) definition of cyber culture is "the set of technologies (material and intellectual), practices, attitudes, modes of thought and values that developed along with the growth of cyberspace". Moreover, online communities were classified by Armstrong and Hagel (1996) into four different types, communities of interest, communities of relationship, communities of transaction and communities of practice. The specific researched communities in this thesis are considered communities of interest since "they are linked to a specific product" (Quinton & Harridge-March, 2010, p.61), which for us is translated as the activities within city rebranding where residents can co-create.

3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

By using interviews, the marketing managers' views, perceptions and opinions were discovered (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p.242). According to the interpretivist approach, the researcher is in need of understanding the events and interactions around individuals based on their experience (Willis & Broom, 2004, p.25). Thus with the interviews we unfolded the motivations of city's brand representatives and how they form the strategy based on what they perceive from their environment. It is the aim to "collect information that captures the meaning and interpretation of phenomenon in relation to the interviewee's worldview" (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p.253). We decided to conduct semi-structured interviews for this qualitative research, since we are interested in finding out "the interviewees' own perspectives" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.466) and also because it describes the "life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale, 2007, p.7). A semi-structured interview type will be used as this consists of "a series of questions that are in general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.205). This technique is chosen as questions on how managers co-operate and incorporate residents in city's activities will be asked. Thus, it has a purpose and targets to cover by interpreting the interviewee's message (Kvale, 2007). In this context, when an interesting insight arises, the interviewer (student) is able to move further on this question and get fruitful information. More specifically, we have collected data through Skype, in-depth interviews. According to Burgess (1982, p. 107) "the interview is... the opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply to uncover new clues, open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience". Interestingly, during our long, semi-structured interviews we had the ease to fix the sequel of the questions and ask them new questions that showed up based on their answers (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.467). Apparently, the specific interviews have an explanatory purpose, which is the one with little structure but within a certain area (Kvale, 2007, p.38). In addition, based on the answers we could modify the questions, by excluding for instance points that were already mentioned. Besides, in qualitative research the interviewee leads somehow the formation of the research questions and influences the findings whereas in quantitative research, the results the interviewer wants to end up to are standard (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.466). The reason why we did not conduct face-to-face interviews is because of cost since our interviewee would be abroad. According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012, p.254) phone interviews are sometimes preferred as they can be easily re-arranged, even though they can entail some limitations for the research, which we will mention below. Despite the fact that they were Skype interviews, we managed to keep them long, even if it is believed that it is easier for the interviewee to keep it shorter on the phone or Skype in our case (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.489). We agree thus with Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p.349) that phone interviews can be quite convenient. Besides, several researchers consider web conferencing interviews to offer the same

results as face-to-face ones, because of the interaction achieved (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p.350). Apparently, unstructured interviews could not be the case for this thesis as there were many aspects about both rebranding process and residents that needed to be discussed even in a broad plan.

3.5 Sampling method

3.5.1 Netnography

According to Kozinets (2010, p.89), when sampling in netnography, the online communities have to be “relevant, active, interactive, substantial, heterogeneous and data-rich”. Before choosing the sample, those characteristics were taken into consideration and were implemented. Nevertheless, the sample we chose cannot be described as “interactive” as our data are “archival”, meaning that we did not participate in their formation. Entrée is as mentioned before one step within netnography, basically identifying the research questions and spotting the most appropriate online communities (Kozinets, 2010). Therefore, this is a crucial step for sampling in the online world, as it defined the websites we used. The sampling method used is a probability one, since according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012) we knew the sample that we would choose, meaning that we were more oriented towards specific online communities based on our topic. It means that specific websites with the desired content and as such the ones informing us about activities revealing the co-creation concept between residents and the city brand were under investigation. Netnography does not only help in finding online forums and chats but also social networks, blogs and corporate websites (Kozinets, 2010). Therefore, given our research question, the sample had to show those links between residents’ activity and city managers by bringing out the various participatory events as deriving from their attitudes, beliefs and so on. It should be mentioned that the online research led us to a certain point reforming our research question as the data we gathered indirectly show people’s opinions and needs, by assuming that the journalists represent residents.

3.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

Regarding the chosen interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, individuals create their own interpretation of reality by combining it with certain events (Bryman, 2001), a point of view that influenced us conducting some auxiliary interviews. They take place so that they explore empirical knowledge or different social situations, by answering “why” (Kvale, 2007). In our research, in order to give the desired answers regarding the process of rebranding, those answers needed not only to be given by the side of residents, who have a first role in our subject, but also from the managerial one. It is of great significance to explore their triggers, beliefs and targets when they started city rebranding some years ago, but also the strategy they imply up to date. Consequently, we orientated towards city brand managers and specifically “Amsterdam Marketing” as this is the responsible organization for Amsterdam’s branding. Initially, the target was to reach as many managers as possible within the

organization, thus we contacted about ten of them by mailing them. When contacting them we bared in mind that we should be politely insistent as Healey and Rawlinson (1993) propose. The sampling method we used is a probability one, since we contacted the specific organization to gather our information and according to Neville (2007) when using probably samples one can have control over the selection. Apparently, it was necessary for us to overcome the fact that approaching managers can be challenging because of their busy schedule, their status and the difficulty in reaching those (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.473).

3.6 Conducting research

3.6.1 Netnography

When conducting netnography there are two ways of gathering data, the first one where the researcher copies from the computer-mediated communications of online community members and the second one where he inscribes the observations of the community and their meaning (Kozinets, 2010). In our case, we observed what people find as the most interesting activities to co-create their city and thus we gathered them by searching some newspapers and blogs about Amsterdam city. More specifically, we addressed to search engines in order to have the best results for the specific topic we wanted to investigate. It is also important to note that a broad and thorough computerized search may be required, as the topic of interest may be categorized at varying levels of abstraction, for example, at the brand, product category, or activity type level (Kozinets, 2010). We followed many different types, forms and structures of online communication. We used key words to find websites on google.com, clicked through Facebook to find relevant websites and even contacted residents of Amsterdam to understand where they get aware of what the city offers to them.

3.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

The interviews that were conducted for the purpose of this thesis were in-depth as we mentioned before. Since we had to conduct long interviews and encompass a lot of questions, we considered it would be efficient to provide the interviewees with the interview guide in advance, so that they can have themselves better prepared. Besides, “creating an interview guide creates a comfortable interaction with the participant” (Doody & Noonan, 2013, p.30). In the same sense, by planning an interview guide the interviewer can avoid several obstacles such as phrasing of hard questions, sensitive topics and so on (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). More specifically, since the interviews took place through Skype calls, it was essential for us to establish a relaxed and friendly environment so that the participants would feel comfortable. According to Doody and Noonan (2013, p.31), the social context in which interviews take place affects the relationship that is created between the two parts. Obtaining the interviewee’s trust is according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012) a

pivotal element throughout the process as it brings the researcher one step closer to the desired outcome and facilitates the research. Before conducting the interviews, we went through the organization's website and got informed about the issues which concern it the most, as Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson propose (2012, p.261). We decided that the place of the Skype interviews would be home, as we should stay focused and unaffected (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

When it comes to the questions we came up with for the city brand managers, we had them separated in different categories so that it is clearer for them to understand the flow of the conversation. In the beginning we let them know about the length of the interview, the fact that it would be recorded and asked them some general questions. Furthermore, according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p.331), providing the participants with the consent form facilitates the process and thus we mailed it to them. Critical incident technique was a main point within this qualitative research when asking the managers their perception of city rebranding and some examples of the past, as "participants are asked to describe in detail a critical incident or number of incidents that are key to the research question" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p.332). Accordingly, critical incident technique is used in qualitative researches when according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012, p.266) "it is asked to track back to particular instances in their work lives and to explain their actions and motives with specific regard to those instances", for example "*What do you consider to be the main activities that Amsterdam Marketing successfully undertook within the last years?*".

The structure of the questioning was diverse. More specifically, the biggest part of the questions are "open", as they permit the participant replying the way he wants and avoiding bias (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009:332), for instance "*What are the main communication tools you have been using for Amsterdam rebranding?*". Validity can thus be achieved in a greater level when the questions are open and new aspects can emerge (Hand, 2003; Deamley, 2005). Probing questions though are the ones that bring the interview closer to the desired outcome and within the frame of the research question, since "they sharpen the interviewee's response" (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p.251), such as "*What do you consider to be the basic needs that residents have when their city changes image?*". It was also avoided including too many questions about theoretical concepts since there may arise the possibility of misunderstanding between the two parts (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009), as well as asking "why" since it can be considered as defensive and sharp (Doody & Noonan, 2013). To a large extent, we encouraged them to add more information that they considered to be of significance, even if it was not included in the questions we posed to them. Both of the interviews were recorded, after having taken permission from the participants. Nevertheless, it is commonly said that it can stress the interviewees (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p.264), thus in the informed consent form we inform them that they can stop the process if they wish to do so.

3.7 Data Analysis

The different approaches for data analysis in qualitative method can vary in general among grounded theory, thematic analysis, analytic induction or narrative analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011). All the above can be very useful tools when analyzing qualitative data, especially since “they very rapidly generate a large, cumbersome database” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.571). When we started data collection, it was soon that we tried to identify the different categories that will fit the best in our analysis part, since it could influence the further gathering of data and therefore the answer to our research question (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.585). Interestingly, when analyzing both netnography and interviews, we apply on our analysis some of the basic steps of grounded theory, since according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p.490), “there is no standardized procedure for analyzing qualitative data”. More specifically, this means that after having formed the research question (step 1), we identified the broad sample we will use (step 3) and when an amount of the data was gathered, we slightly modified the research question (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.580). Moreover, data categorization was the next step and is respective to coding. Coding can be defined as “reducing data into meaningful segments and assigning names for the segments” (Cresswell, 2013, p.180), through an iterative approach (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets, 2013, p.141), which is in accordance to the approach of this thesis. The interviews we conducted were in accordance to the broad plan of the literature review (Strauss & Corbin, 2008) so that there is a coherence for the reader, meaning that Incentives for city rebranding, Best tools to rebrand the city, Residents’ involvement- Concept of co-creation and Relationships with other stakeholders are the categories we had in mind when coding (step 4, 6) (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.580). For netnography, the categories were more specified on residents since this was our initial purpose and specifically distinguishing the different ways for co-creation. Besides, when the categories or patterns were designed, we could still go back and restructure the respective data in each one (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). During the coding and the correspondence of the data in categories, we used a manual way by labeling every different group of data according to the category that matches the best (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Initially, regarding interviews we developed more categories which we later integrated so as to “stay focused on the analysis” (Dey, 1993, p.95) and have a consistency throughout our data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3.8 Primary and Secondary Sources

Online newspapers are used as a primary source in this thesis, as we framed the data collection from newspapers after having formed the research question (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p.267). More specifically, we went through Dutch and some international newspapers to find out events and activities that contributed in the rebranding of Amsterdam. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p.73) newspapers provide us with topical events and main stories, especially the

“quality” ones, which we included when collecting our data. Secondary data were also used throughout this research, as “they are used as a complement to primary data” (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p.267). Moreover, journals used as a secondary source of data gave us a significant insight both when searching the gaps within the literature but also when forming the background of literature that we wanted to expand, mostly found in Lund’s University online library. Books were used in the beginning of the thesis process as well, so that we formed a well-structured and interesting for the academic world topic.

3.9 Methodological reflections

Methodological reflections include Reliability and Validity, which are criteria that are needed to evaluate the quality of the research conducted (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Reliability is concerned with the repeatability of the results (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In other words, it is about the consistency of the analytical procedures which should include the accounting for personal and research method biases that may have an influence on the findings (Noble & Smith, 2015). Validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Hence it is about the precision in which the findings accurately reflect the data (Noble & Smith, 2015). Another term that is mentioned in qualitative research is that of external validity, also known as generalisability (Noble & Smith, 2015). This notion is about the transferability of the findings to another setting and the applicability in other contexts (Noble & Smith, 2015).

3.9.1 Reliability

Reliability is associated with the concepts of consistency and neutrality (or confirmability) in a qualitative sense (Noble & Smith, 2015). According to Yin (2015), reliability is increased in the case team research is conducted. This is described by Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 395) as internal reliability. In other words, internal validity is “whether or not, when there is more than one observer, members of the research team agree about what they see and hear” which is achieved in general in this thesis. Furthermore, the external reliability is increased by conducting two interviews with the managers as a double check to test if the attitudes and opinions match. Netnography has the characteristic not to vanish; the data is always available online. This increases the reliability because when the same search terms are used, the same comments and texts can be found even if it was years ago. However, external reliability is seen as a difficult criterion for qualitative research and therefore in this research external validity is not completely guaranteed, but the possible measurements were taken to assure the highest external reliability level possible (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.395).

3.9.2 Validity

Validity is considered to be the key quality control issue of a study (Yin, 2015). Even a study that embraces the relativist ontological stance, where no single reality is considered, it still needs to be

concerned with validity (Yin, 2015). Therefore in our research we have tried to use a strong design, which has been an attempt to strengthen the validity of the research. Joseph Maxwell who has written a lot on qualitative research design characterizes that the research process is an “interactive” process. Here “the purpose, research question, conceptual context, methods and the concern for validity continually interact with each other” (Maxwell, 1996, p.1-8; Yin, 2015). Therefore throughout the research it is possible to “strengthening the validity” by making certain design choices (Yin, 2015). One of such design choices we made is that in the research design we have tried to gather our data with interviews and netnography.

Maxwell (2012) made a seven point checklist to combat threats to validity, however not all points could be covered in this research. All these points will be discussed here. Intensive long-term involvement wasn't covered due to a short time frame. Furthermore, this study also neglects the need for quasi-statistics. However, most points were covered and tried to be covered and bared in mind while conducting the research as much as possible. Hence, rich data was tried to be achieved through conducting two interviews with managers to get a double confirmation, detailed and varied data on the managers' view. The validity is increased with the use of two interviews as a built-in check upon. For netnography the concept of rich data is achieved by the large amount of comments and opinions found. Respondent validation has been not achieved in the netnography as no feedback on their views and behaviours has been asked, due to the high amount of comments and anonymity of writers. For interviews however we didn't observe the behaviour but we asked their opinions straight away, so we cannot include these. The search for discrepant evidence and negative cases has been achieved by a deep searched literature review, trying to find contradicting findings and conclusions compared to this research contribution. Furthermore there has been tried to argue and “think” and “brainstorm” of contradicting explanations to rule them out by common sense. Triangulation, has been achieved by combining interviews with netnography, we see this as a big strength of our research. In this case we collected converging evidence from different sources, hoping to increase the richness, deepness and validity of our data and research. The concept of comparison has been achieved. By comparing the two interviewees and making categories in the netnography the validity has been increased (Maxwell, 2009).

In the case of external validity or otherwise called generalizability (Bryman & Bell, 2011) the idea is about replication, which is about transferring the results to other context of cases. Replication might be found when conducting a multiple case study when there are similarities within cases (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However since this is not the case for this research, we cannot provide a high level of generalizability.

3.9.3 Ethical and political considerations

Online research ethics are in a state of flux (Kozinets, 2015). Kozinets (2015) discusses that there is a question of what is private and what is public in online spaces. He said that this raises concerns about personal privacy and control of information. This has effected the existence of legal grey areas where international agreements are often not synchronized. Kozinets (2015) mentions that there are certain guidelines that specify the way that source materials should be cited or used in netnography and when needed anonymity and cloaking of participants names is warranted. Netnography looks for hidden or taken for granted power relations, just like ethnography but in social media spaces and the internet (Kozinets, 2015). He mentions that it analyzes the social and cultural effects of these relations. Moreover Kozinets (2015) argues that the social, political, technical, moral, legal and cultural implications of social media are continually transforming. Thus, netnography as a research technique evolves and grows rapidly and simultaneously. Therefore ethics should be reconsidered in every research (Kozinets, 2015). Nevertheless, since in this thesis we did not use participants' comments as such, we did not have to reveal our identity or participation to them (Kozinets, 2010). All the links from the online media we used are provided in the reference section.

Regarding the interviews, we adhered to the ethics by providing the interviewees with an informed consent form and we made them aware about the fact that they would be recorded and that the information would be supplied to Lund University (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Besides, the publication of the data was considered of not harming the participants (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p.189). Furthermore, there was no invasion of privacy or deception during these interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

4. Findings

In this part we will list the findings that were gathered for the research from both types of data collection. We will first discuss and show the findings from the semi-structured interviews, after which netnographys' findings will be shown.

4.1 Semi-structured interviews

In this first part of the findings, the discussion will stress the content of the complementary to netnography interviews that were conducted as part of the dissertation. As we analyze how residents are involved within city rebranding activities which allow them co-creating the city brand, we found it of pivotal importance to understand first in a more thorough way the incentives of Amsterdam's brand managers and specifically the main branding team "Amsterdam Marketing", since they are the creators of the rebranding strategy. Besides, by delving into the managerial aspect, we are able to familiarize ourselves already with the origin of various activities that residents are involved in and that will be brought up in the next section. In order to simplify it for the reader, we will use the names of the managers as such: Nico Mulder- Consumer Marketing manager, Machteld Ligtoet- Press & Communication Manager.

4.1.1 Incentives for city rebranding

During the interviews, Amsterdam's rebranding was the initial point to acquire some information about. The managers talked in general about the organization "Amsterdam Marketing" which ran the strategy and discussed its early steps. It was founded in 2012 and the initiative of the organization was to rebuild the reputation of the city. The causes for this past reputation crises that Amsterdam had to face were due to various reasons. Notwithstanding, there was a different reflection from the two managers with regards to this "need for change", as Nico supported that "the trigger basically was in the beginning of 00's when Amsterdam was decreasing on several lists, for instance the list "how many visitors come to your city", "how many congresses are coming to your city", "how many businesses locate their business or headquarters in Amsterdam", but also local skill, people were moving out of Amsterdam", connecting it to the damaged economy as well, whilst Machteld did not specify any reasons for city rebranding but instead said "there was a merge of the three different responsible organizations for Amsterdam's marketing since they all faced it in a different way by then". She was even impressed by the term "rebranding" which for her could be just "branding". Nico also supports that there was no consistency in city's branding by then and he used the metaphor "the world of companies was singing songs about Amsterdam but the songs didn't make up for the same musical". He continues that the only things Amsterdam was known for were the canals and the weed,

even if it was not the truth. They both add that the organization started in collaboration with Amsterdam's Municipality.

4.1.2 Best tools to rebrand the city

Nico admits that the rebranding process is a long one and does not happen from one day to another. He argues that the most effective and remarkable tactic during the rebranding process was undeniably the “**I Amsterdam**” logo and Machteld supports the same as well, by mentioning “we talk with politicians, with inhabitants, with people who own hotels, museums, universities. Together we make the city and that was the main idea behind I Amsterdam. I Amsterdam means that when you are here you make the city a little bit different”. But “**I Amsterdam**” is not the only example as both managers have highlighted other useful tools as well. They both mention communication tools with great importance to social media, magazines and communication with their partners. Nico adds that they use visitor centers, I Amsterdam store and several cross-media campaigns.

4.1.3 Residents' involvement- Concept of co-creation

When it comes to the residents' side which is basically our focus, they were quite discussed by the interviewees and they both showed an increased interest for them. More specifically, according to Machteld “the branding of the city is different than the branding of the company because the city is alive and the city is made by people who live there and not by a management team, so for sure we had to make a plan to incorporate all those people”. She actually perceives the balance between residents and tourists the biggest challenge for Amsterdam Marketing at the moment. Nico's words were quite similar as he states that “the city has residents and everybody owns the city”. Moreover, being a Consumer Marketing Manager, he argued that when we look at residents as consumers, we want them to be better ambassadors and brand formers of the city, make them feel proud and spread the word in a sense. Importantly, he also mentions that “Amsterdam has lots of cultural institutions, museums, festivals, theaters, concert halls and this is of high quality level. So, we truly believe it's also interesting for Amsterdammers to take part in all those cultural offerings”. The same attitude was held by Machteld who argued that they are very important and they should be proud. Regarding the awareness of city rebranding for the residents and the clear distinction between the image before and after, Nico supports that they do understand it and also “we had researches done and surveys amongst our residents and we've got data and results. They are very enthusiastic about our strategy the ten last years, as they can see the positive outcomes”. This story-telling way is considered from him the best way to approach the residents, by reminding to them the beautiful stories of Amsterdam. Contradictory to this, Machteld's opinion is quite different as she supports that “they don't think about the strategy and the marketing of Amsterdam and they are not interested. Maybe they do not know but there are lots of good things for them”. Therefore, she does not agree that residents can “make or break” the

city, as Nico does. The intended image that Amsterdam Marketing wants to show in comparison to the one that is perceived by the residents is different as they both agree.

4.1.4 Relationships with other stakeholders

Both of the managers agree that they constantly have to find a consensus, apparently, with the other stakeholder groups and take them into account when they design the city's branding. More specifically, Machteld argues that they used to focus on the tourists' side, by complementing a strategy that would appeal to them more and more. Nico agrees that during the last years, the weight was given to tourists as they were trying to upraise Amsterdam on international lists. Furthermore, he continues that tourists became a big issue for the citizens as their number was constantly growing and also he continues "we need to spread tourism in time and in place, so, not come to Amsterdam in the busy summer but maybe in the spring or in the fall. Also, when they are here, they should not only go to the city center but spread in the metropolitan area as well". When it comes to the Municipality, Nico highlights that they work together to face the overcrowded by tourists city center and more specifically "we want to spread tourism more throughout the city so we need to collaborate with the city as well, we need to see which areas are interesting for tourists to visit". Machteld adds "we have about 1200 partners and together we talk with all those partners, we talk with politicians, with inhabitants, with people who own hotels, museums, universities and so on". They both consider as a challenge the balance between residents and tourists.

4.2 Netnography

After we attained all the data, we went through them. Our findings consist of a part where we make use of categories which are an umbrella term for the homogenous activities and will be explained further in their own sections. After each category a graphical representation is given of the findings. When digging deeper we found differences concerning the initiators of the different activities and it is explained in 4.2.2 section.

4.2.1 Categories

Leisure Activities

What led us forming this category was the fact that many of the activities we found for the residents in the frame of co-creation in city rebranding had an entertaining character, varying among different aspects of leisure. One of the first things we detected was that many of the activities ended up being more tourist- friendly, even if citizens are involved.

Activities that fall under leisure, would be festivals, such as the Amsterdam Dance Festival (ADE), food festivals, movie festival, cultural, theatre, dance activities. A few examples we are explained below. Here is an example of arts or cultural activity:

“His wide communication web allows the Night Mayor to act as a kind of ambassador for Amsterdam. People from different backgrounds who are interested in these forms of art can come together, grow and create their own platforms. What will be the main contribution you will make to Amsterdam’s nightlife? - To implement an understanding that Amsterdam is for everybody!”

Moreover, we noticed that there are several events organized where people can participate and learn about arts and more cultural aspects within Amsterdam.

“Amsterdam may seem like a touristy place, but it also has a vibrant underground and alternative scene. American-born Jeffrey Babcock organizes movie screenings in various venues of Amsterdam. “I see myself refusing to be incorporated into the mainstream commercial business model. That’s why I created a series of cinemas throughout the city.”

This was an example about a cinema concept around the city. Another example includes Amsterdammers getting to know their own city better in terms of nightlife and entertainment.

“Well, it is not about convincing them (Amsterdammers) that they do not know their own city that well. It is about convincing them that there is much more to discover in their own city that they weren’t aware of. A more positive spin. When you have lived your whole life in one place you have your habits and fixed bars and restaurants where you meet up with friends and family. Usually you will not put much effort in discovering every hidden gem in town.”

When searching how the residents of Amsterdam can furthermore contribute in the rebranding of their city, we came across some initiatives of them gathering less known aspects of their city and providing them in public.

“Amsterdam has been changing quickly over the last decade. Neighborhoods that used to be ‘no-go’ areas are now the most popular places to live. The gentrification process of Amsterdam is in full swing. There are many things to say on this subject, but relating to your guide, what have you seen of this process during your research?”

-I wrote my tour guide in about 1,5 year and a lot has changed in only 1,5 years’ time. Especially the waterfront along the IJ in Amsterdam Noord, Bos&Lommer in West and the Transvaalbuurt in East are experiencing a huge increase in restaurants, bars and refurbished houses mainly for young urban professionals. My aim while writing this tour guide was not to write about every new hotspot or hipster venue like many blogs do, but a guide that covers an Amsterdam that Amsterdammers in general know.”

“On Monday, October 5th, almost 60 heritage professionals gathered in the Waag’s Anatomical Theatre. Together, we discussed how co-creation can be applied in the heritage sector to create new stories or new connections with audiences. The session was organized as part of the EU funded RICHES research project. The main objective of RICHES is to reduce the distance between people and culture (what we call ‘recalibrating relationships’ between cultural heritage institutions and audiences). The focus of the afternoon was, therefore, on the audience and what their potential new relationships with heritage institutions might look like, and on how a co-creation approach could potentially drive this process.”

In the figure below we show a graphical representation of our findings in order to make it clearer. Here the center is explained and derived from the activities. Regarding those activities we have found comments and information about the certain ones, which we have presented here.

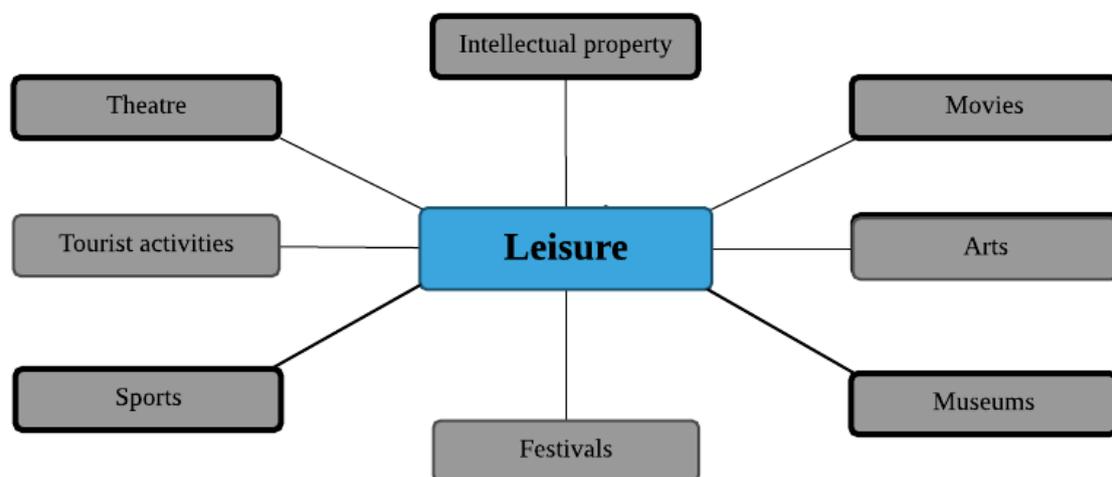


Figure: Leisure activities

Sustainability activities

In addition, the second category we came up with when analyzing the different activities was sustainability, where we included the greatest part of our findings. More specifically, several data showed that people participate consciously in events improving the quality of living in Amsterdam.

In order to explain this category, a few examples are shown. Activities would include the encouragement of the sharing economy.

“Amsterdam is known as the “Sharing City”. A majority of 84% of Amsterdam residents is very happy to actively participate in the sharing economy, in the form of AirBNB, Snapcar, Comms, Peerby, WeGo etc. The College of Mayor and the councilors in Amsterdam have adopted a proactive attitude towards the sharing economy. (...) At the same time, the College is aware of excesses that can negatively impact the city, for example if this leads to an unequal playing field or a lack of social

security. The College will therefore intervene when unwelcome situations arise as a result of particular initiatives. This means that the approach of the sharing economy is not only a matter of permitting or prohibiting aspects of it, but rather one of closely monitoring and actively responding to certain developments and of utilizing opportunities wherever these occur.”

Besides sustainability in economy, many activities call citizens to co-create with energy sustainability activities, which constituted also a great amount of initiatives.

“The goal of the rotating windmills is to reach as much people from Amsterdam as possible in a few days. And to let everyone know that you’re pro windmills! If 10.000 people express themselves in a positive way, and if a part of this wants to participate, there will be sufficient support for a first mill. The goal of this initiative is to place as much cooperative windmills as possible, so we all receive the same energy and profit.”

Moreover, we found initiatives where people would be involved and exchange opinions about the environmental situation of their city.

“When is the best time to take a swim in the canals? Which route is the healthiest to take to work? And what’s the real level of noise pollution in your neighborhood? These are all examples of questions that could be answered in the Smart Citizens Lab. In each session, we will invite experts to tell us more about the possibilities, impact, and relevance of citizens who take the measurement of local, environmental data into their own hands.”

“During renovations to houses in Nieuw-West, attention will be focused on the residents themselves. The project will see close collaboration with residents to explore how energy saving measures can be introduced in their homes. A driving principle of the project is that the process is as agreeable as possible for residents and that the introduction of such measures causes the minimum of inconvenience. Residents will also be consulted with regard to the extent to which they are willing to invest in energy saving measures for their homes. The project to involve residents in exploring energy saving measures is part of the European City-zen initiative, which is designed to demonstrate innovations related to smart grids, district heating networks and improving the sustainability of houses.”

Also, activities that lead to co-creation.

(Translated from Dutch) “The goal of Civocracy is to involve residents in political and social problems. We have a trustworthy developed an online platform (see ww.civocracy.org) that makes effective, constructive discussions and joint decision making between privy parties (citizens, companies, organisations, authorities) and stimulates active involvement of citizens. Civocracy makes it easy for citizens to deepen themselves and to give their opinion”

(Translated from Dutch) “Beautiful, Smart, Sustainable Wildeman. In the neighborhood of Wildeman in Osdorp is Amsterdam Smart City working on a beautiful, sustainable and smart neighborhood. We do this together with the residents, they are after all the experts on their own neighborhood and know where smart solutions can be provided.”

Similarly as explained above, the figure presented here consists of the various activities that are related to Sustainability.

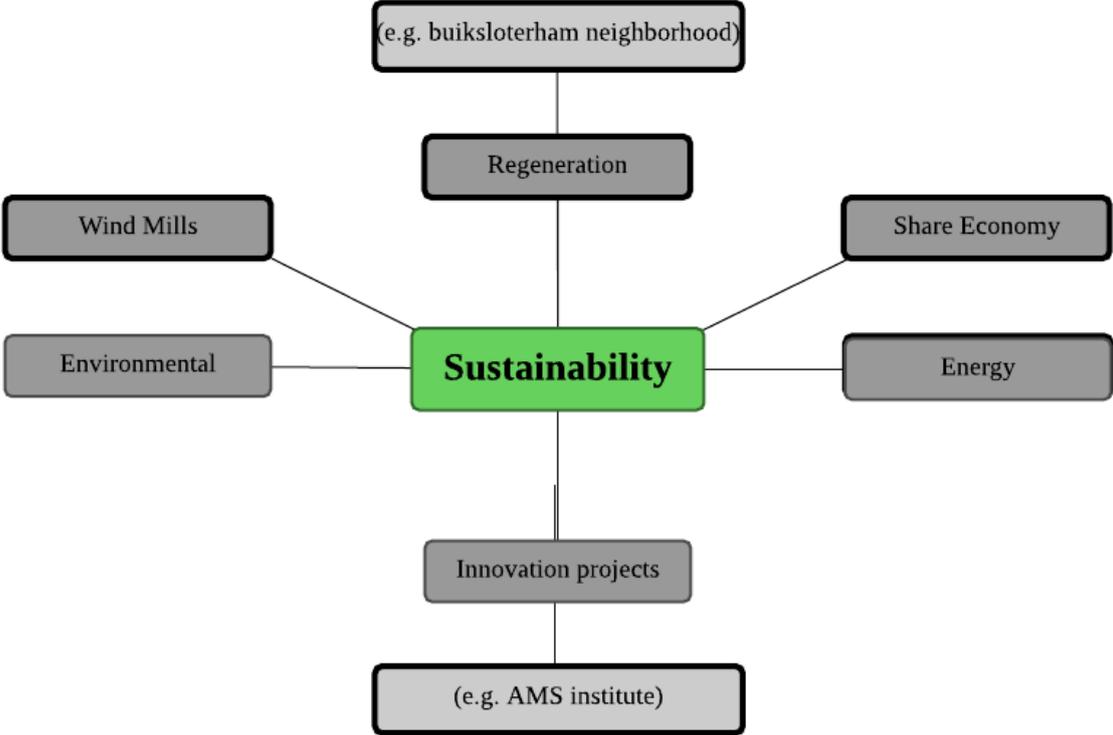


Figure: Sustainability activities

The Voice

This category does not describe activities as such, but the most of residents’ reactions, opinions, critics and so on that we found online, fact that we accept as contributing in city’s rebranding and is considered as “feedback”. For instance, Amsterdam Fair City is a movement that gives the opportunity to residents raising their voice. It is a reply on activities going on.

“If we want to build a desirable future for our city, we have to step out of the ideological trinity of innovation and look at our city unconditioned by consulting slogans and policy fashions. Fortunately, there is a growing movement in Amsterdam that is trying to do exactly that: Amsterdam Fair City. It is a platform of initiatives and groups from all walks of life and with all kinds of motivations. What they

share is a concern for the city that emerges right out its gritty reality. It comes from a place of defiant love, where people are in touch with the struggles and joys of their hometown. It is open to everyone who believes that fairness should define the rules of the game when it comes to building the future of Amsterdam. And because of that, it necessarily has to be a movement that entails conflict and dissent as part of a democratic process toward a Fair City. No happy-go-lucky chimaeras of city marketing here. Amsterdam doesn't want to be a Smart City. Or a Creative City. Or – Mokum forbid – a Happy City. Amsterdam wants to be a Fair City.”

But in some cases, residents react negatively regarding the touristic activities, which are considered to annoy them.

“But sadly the Mayor of Amsterdam has recently launched an attack on the Beer Bike concept and is threatening to ban this popular source of pleasure in downtown areas of the city. Labelling them a “nuisance”, the Mayor is planning an illegal ‘ghettoization’ of Beer Bikes that would banish them to the fringes of the city and force many operators to close. Less than 4 complaints a month does not seem to be sufficient grounds for a ban.”

(Translated from Dutch) ‘Spread the busyness in time and space. Busyness(=too much people in one place) is co-caused by the concentration of attractive places for citizens and visitors to visit and the therewith traffic bottlenecks on these places. Busyness will become less by spreading sights in and out of the city center and outside the ring. Amsterdam Marketing is already distributing to the Zaanse Schans, Zandvoort and promotes itself as Amsterdam Beach and the Muiderstot as Amsterdam Castle. But we need more. Develop the Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal till attractive second red carpet; realize sights outside the city center, including festivals and markets; an there is already an Paradiso North, why not a Paradiso West as well? With permit grants to businesses and organizations the municipality is obliged to be vigilant with the ultimate accessibility of the public spaces; Develop theme routes for visitors where the charm of other city parts is high lightened; Improve night opening hours for museums and other popular sights”.

Entire resident groups fight against ideas that would harm their city in their eyes,

Such as tourist activities,

(Translated from Dutch) “The municipality grounded the objection of the VVAB against the Hottug. The permit that the municipality already gave is withdrawn. The VVAB sees this as an important victory in the fight against the unflattering touristic activities in the canals of Amsterdam center”.

(Translated from Dutch) “The so called amfibike does not get a permit to operate on the canals in Amsterdam. The vessel that is powered by pedals by the passengers ‘does not fit in the image the municipality has about its canals’ is written by the alderman Udo Kock to the council”.

Or just the busy centre in general, an actual movement

(Translated from Dutch) “First demonstration against the busyness. On Friday the 9th of October the first suitcase demonstration took place initiated by the citizens against the busy city center, the rapid grow of tourism, the amount of hotels and the amusement parkization of the city. The demonstration where the suitcase was used as the symbol took place from het Koningsplein to the formal Paleis van Justitie that will possibly become a hotel”.

But they come with “feedback” or ideas to improve the city such as;

(Translated from Dutch) “he says, by making special Amsterdam passes, we can manage the mass tourism. Imagine that you are capable of managing the negative effects of busyness to certain extends. If you know what people are doing, you can response to this as a city, for example with the police force”

(Translated from Dutch) “Visitors are highly influencable by information. Therefore it is of big concern that all the measurements that are made are being supported by (online) information. Apps and app-messages exist about places where it is busy and how to avoid them (real time data). Or recommendations about the restrictions of group sizes by a cycle tour. Foster ticket sale beforehand; Regard signage physical and digital; Communicate do’s and don’ts for visitors. Like: what to do in Amsterdam, but what definitely not?’ e.g. cycling on the sidewalk”

Our react negatively on the changes in the city, one trend found is that of the increase of ‘busyness’ in the city center in term of tourists and visitors.

(Translated from Dutch) “Het Haarlemmerplein is becoming a second Leidseplein. Tourism and hospitality increase and social housing is disappearing. Stop this process and save de Haarlemmerpoort.”

(Translated from Dutch) “Another Hotel? I thought that there was a stop on hotels. The city has become way to busy. The museums have long waiting lines. Amsterdam is becoming less fun.”

However some are against the actions that will be taken to do something about the busy center,

(Translated from Dutch) “On Tuesday the 12th of April the chairman Willem Koster talked to the general board of the borough Amsterdam Center. He wasn’t alone. Together with 20 others he came to announce why closing de Munt is such a bad plan”

There is also the opportunity for them to express themselves through some platforms.

“The municipality wants to facilitate a circular economy as good as possible. Therefore we want to know what ideas and initiatives, large or small, you (residents and businesses in the city and region)

have. We also want to know what opportunities and obstacles exist. What do you think? Let us know through the contact form. Based on the responses, the municipality determines what is needed from the government to support the transition towards a circular economy. Comments coming in before May 10, 2016 will be taken along with the government's response to the investigation 'Amsterdam Circular. A vision and roadmap for the city and the region.'"

And some residents just do it themselves; they don't want help from the government,

(Translated from Dutch) "Fits with the character of the neighbourhood. Also in the neighborhoods of Amsterdam are initiative takers looking for recognizable stories to bind people. The neighborhood South stresses the individual and unique character of the initiative. Set concepts do not fit. And we don't want these imposed on us from the government and social organisations" says Jacques Allegro. It reflects the independent character of the citizens of this neighborhood with high educated people. Somewhere else in the city is the binding story something different. In this way is neighborhood Nieuwmarkt emphasizing the inter generation solidarity. Something that fits the character of the Nieuwmarkt-hood."

In the figure below we show a graphical representation of residents' reaction.

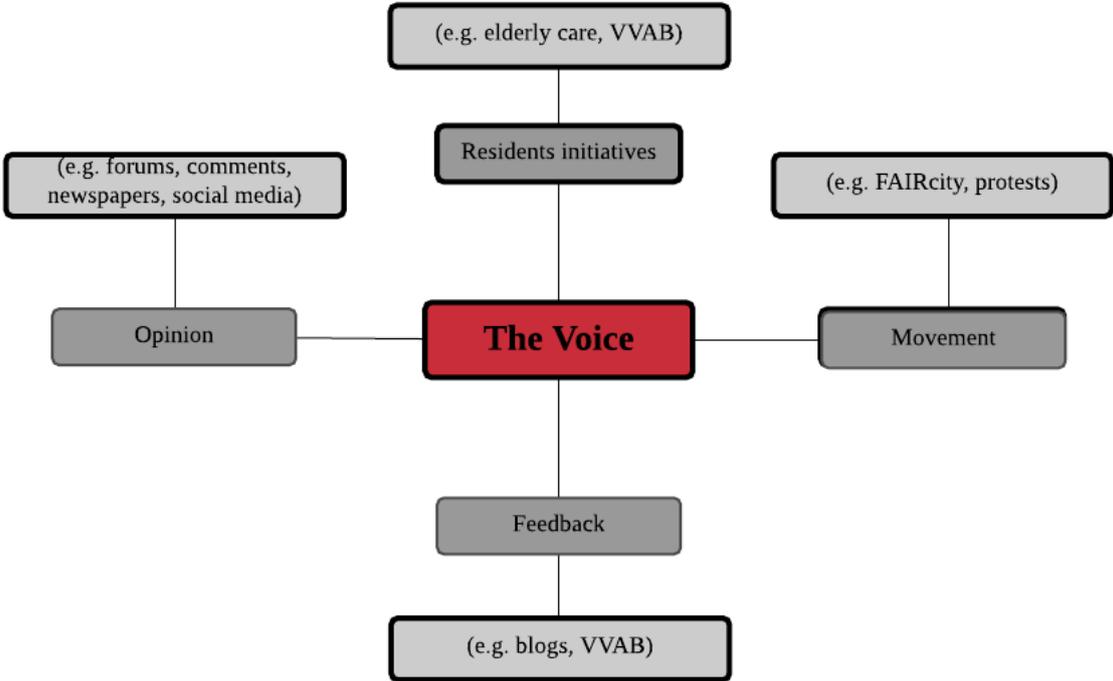


Figure: The Voice

4.2.2 Concepts

After having observed the activities that people can take part in and co-create their city, we noticed that it would be rather explaining for our topic to find out and distinguish them based on who is the initiator of those activities. Thus, we attempted to collect data both stemming from residents' initiatives and from other stakeholders (city brand managers, government, organizations), which we called the responsible' initiatives.

Residents' initiatives

Apparently, every protest or movement where they express their voice is an action initiated from residents, since it is them who gather in order to be heard. For instance, Amsterdam Fair City is a concept that residents have come up with. Nevertheless, when it comes to the activities offered to residents and giving them the ability to collaborate and offer in their city's branding, those ones are rarely organized by residents. One example of the residents' grouping is:

(Translated from Dutch) "MKB-Amsterdam, Vereniging Amsterdam City, Koninklijk Horeca Nederland afdeling Amsterdam en de Vereniging Vrienden van de Amsterdamse Binnenstad have made a statement together about the increasing bustle in Amsterdam. "

Responsibles' initiatives

We soon realized that the greatest amount of city events are organized by city brand managers, government and businesses. More specifically, what is significant to us is not investigating in accuracy who of those stakeholders introduces and event, but showing that those "responsibles" are mainly the initiators.

*"During renovations to houses in Nieuw-West, attention will be focused on the residents themselves. The project will see close collaboration with residents to explore how energy saving measures can be introduced in their homes. A driving principle of the project is that the process is as agreeable as possible for residents and that the introduction of such measures causes the minimum of inconvenience. Residents will also be consulted with regard to the extent to which they are willing to invest in energy saving measures for their homes. (...)The project to involve residents in exploring energy saving measures is part of the **European City-zen initiative**, which is designed to demonstrate innovations related to smart grids, district heating networks and improving the sustainability of houses. The project is focused on ordinary city districts such as Nieuw-West in Amsterdam and EcoCité in Grenoble. Residents of – and visitors to – the two districts play a key role in the solutions. This innovative approach dovetails with the ambitions of Amsterdam Smart City and Grenoble EcoCité, two of Europe's largest Smart Energy testing grounds".*

*"The **municipality of Amsterdam** experiments with crowdsourcing on the platform AmsterdamOpent.nl, in order to learn how interaction with civilians can support local policies. In*

addition to the website www.amsterdamopent.nl, users with a Facebook profile can submit their ideas directly through a Facebook application. In 2010, AmsterdamOpent already experimented with 3 social crowdsource questions. In 2012, two new questions were posed on AmsterdamOpent.nl. These are linked to another Smart City project, AppsforAmsterdam. After the evaluation of the current pilot, more civil servants will be given the opportunity to submit their questions to the platform. They will then be supported by civil servants who are currently involved as learning partners.”

5. Discussion

This section will discuss the deeper meaning and thought derived from the findings and literature. This section will lead to answering the research question introduced in the introduction: *how are the co-creation efforts which are created by city brand managers in the frame of rebranding perceived and complemented by residents in the case of Amsterdam*. In order to answer the research question above, the sub-questions: *what are the co-creation efforts made by city brand managers for the residents as part of the rebranding process* and *what are the attitudes and roles of residents in the place branding process* will first be answered.

5.1 City Brand Managers

Considering the city brand managers and the co-creation efforts they organize we will try to answer the sub-question *what are the co-creation efforts made by city brand managers for the residents, as part of the rebranding process*. Hence, in this research we examined their contribution in city's rebranding and more specifically the efforts they have made to attract people co-creating Amsterdam.

“This is what we tried with I Amsterdam, to incorporate them in the name of Amsterdam. That way, they feel like they are Amsterdam for themselves and everybody is the “I” in I Amsterdam.” (Nico Mulder, 22-04-2016).

Their contribution as stakeholders within the formation of the city brand is crucial as supported by scholars, since they are the ones that adapt residents' needs and wants (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). This is confirmed from both a) the interviews and b) the netnography we conducted. Firstly, the two managerial interviews we conducted reveal to us the fact that almost the whole brand name of Amsterdam is formed by their organization. Amsterdam Marketing is the organization which has been responsible for the rebranding of the city (Nico Mulder, 22-04-2016). As both managers said, Amsterdam Marketing (before the merge and its current image) has created the logo **I Amsterdam**, which signified the 'new era' for Amsterdam. Hanna and Rowley (2011) accept that a city can be turned to a place where new resources are exploited, new activities are set up and people can enjoy commercial and economic growth. Indeed, from the managerial perspective it was confessed that it was because of both economic turndown and several international lists that they realized it was high time for rebranding.

Nonetheless, Zenker (2011) and Braun and Zenker (2010) mention that a place brand is based on perceptions of different customer groups. However they state that place marketers often believe that the brand is a controllable and fully manageable tool that can be defined and measured easily. Hence, we remain of the opinion that place satisfaction is very complicated as a place is a “lived concept” as it

is inhabited and people live their experiences in this place (Cresswell & Hoskin, 2008, p.394). Moreover this complexity is also approved and pointed out by Braun and Zenker (2010, p.5) by that a place brand is “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”. This research reapproved that it is complex even by city brand practitioners’ view, as part of our findings in the interviews with Nico Mulder (22-04-2016) and Machteld Ligtoet (06-05-2016), who respectively state; “A city is an organism which is alive, it’s always changing and developing. It’s hard sometimes for people in the city to see that it is changing” and “The branding of the city is different than the branding of the company because the city is alive and the city is made by people who live there and not by a management team. So for sure we had to make a plan to incorporate all those people”. This is strengthened by Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2013, p.18) who stated that “residents are largely neglected by place branding practice and their priorities are often misunderstood, even though they are not passive beneficiaries but are active partners and co-producers of public goods, services and policies”. However, Amsterdam tries to deal with the various stakeholders that are influenced by the city brand; residents, tourists, businesses and 1200 specific partners (Nico Mulder, 22-04-2016 and Machteld Ligtoet, 06-05-2106). One example is the “story-telling” approach that they apply to their city’s rebranding, as Nico Mulder (22-04-2016) said. They also try to communicate the city brand by using several types of media and press. In literature it is said that city brand managers have to organize city’s strategy in coherence with the politicians, as sometimes their focus may be on the tourists whilst residents are neglected (Stubbs & Warnaby, 2015). This is proved by the fact that they always act in close cooperation with the Municipality as the interviewees said.

Besides the interviews, we were able to find out online the initiatives they have been undertaken for several years. As part of our findings, we noticed that there is a great volume of efforts for activities as part of co-creation between residents and city brand managers. We assume that the volume of the co-creation efforts we found online falling under the rebranding process reveal the greater effort of attracting residents. Along with the initiatives starting from Amsterdam Marketing, we encompassed some more in our research, as for instance the ones initiated by government, municipality or other organizations. The reason why we group those initiatives is as we perceive them being stakeholders as well, even if not on the focus and we call them all “the other parties”. From the online data we found, it was soon noticed that the efforts made by the residents’ side were limited. According to Kasabov and Sundaram (2013) the relationship among stakeholders of a place as reflected on all types of communication and interaction means contribution to the brand. Therefore, this limited effort as starting from the residents reveals their indifference or unawareness. This was also elicited from Machteld Ligtoet (06-05-2016), who supported that most of them do not know about Amsterdam Marketing’s work.

To conclude and answer the sub-question, the efforts that call residents to collaborate and become happier are of diverse nature with the main ones falling under either leisure activities or efforts for a more sustainable Amsterdam. Night Mayor, Amsterdam Dance Festival, Sharing City, Smart Citizens Lab are only some of those activities that we observed online. All of them work as the context under which we examine happy citizens. As Nico Mulder (22-04-2016) said, they want to bring them closer and let them know. Thus, they attempt to make them happier by offering all sorts of activities.

5.2 The Co-Creation Model

Now we have found the brand managers role and activities in rebranding we suggest a co-creation model. The term of co-creation of a place is “the process in which residents are producers and consumers of identity” (Kerr and Oliver, 2015, p.67). Nico Mulder (22-04-2016) states that the Amsterdam Dance Event (ADE) is a beautiful example of the core values of Amsterdam, thus it represents the city brand. He also mentions that they run campaigns to co-create with the residents. In our study, these campaigns and the example of ADE are named as ‘activities’. Furthermore, Cresswell (2004, p.37) argues that “places are constructed by people doing things and in this sense are never ‘finished’ but are constantly being performed”. Together with our findings and viewpoint we have found that co-creation is a process achieved by the constant interaction among the residents, brand managers and activities. This is strengthened by Kavartzis, Warnaby and Ashworth (2015a, p.43) since “a place product is co-created through the actions of those within and around it”. To further explain the elements of the co-creation model we will focus on residents in interaction with activities.

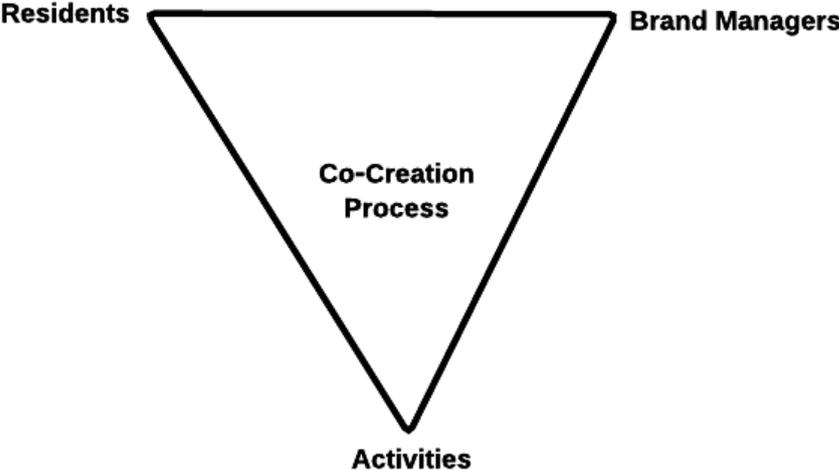


Figure: the co-creation model

5.3 The Residents

Considering the residents in interaction with the activities we will try to answer the sub-question which is *what are the attitudes and roles of residents in place rebranding process*. In the netnography conducted we have found that activities that have to do with residents are mainly the category that was labelled as “the voice”. Around this category we observe an atmosphere of negativity. The voice is described by us and is about residents’ reactions, opinions, critics and is considered to be seen as feedback for the city’s responsables’. One finding we might state is that the comments regarding the activities were ways for movements, feedback on an activities (e.g. how to improve) and opinions (e.g. hate it, love it). A somewhat different form of the voice was residents’ initiatives, such as the VVAB. This stems from the lack of the city in residents’ interests, such as the demolition of old buildings (that residents like to keep) for new businesses (the business stakeholder). Here the city brand stakeholder complexity is clearly viewable. Boisen, Terlouw and Gorp (2011) noted that a diverse range of stakeholders attempt to manage the city brand for assorted reasons.

We have made a distinction between unhappy and happy residents, where unhappy is the group of the voice. The group we consider to be labelled as “happy” could be happy, unaware, indifferent, unhappy but inactive. Hence, when we refer to “happy” residents, based on our findings we define them basically as the ones that are willing to participate in the various events in order to co-create their city and they show it. Nico Mulder (22-04-2016) said that they are enthusiastic for the rebranding of the city. This is clearly seen from the volume of the events where they have the opportunity to participate, either for leisure or to keep their city sustainable. Moreover, it seems that many of the residents actually do not know about the different efforts that take place involving them. Machteld Ligtvoet (06-05-2016) said “maybe they do not know” about what is going on, resulting in their inactive attitude. Besides, Bennet and Savani (2003) argue that a new place identity is not always understood by everyone. Thus, those are the “unaware” ones. Apparently, there is the group of the “unhappy” residents as well, who choose to raise their voice and show their dissatisfaction. We noticed through our online research that there are several cases where Amsterdammers show their disappointment or anger for various things happening around them, constituting ‘The Voice’. For instance, the trigger can be the fact that they want more cultural uplift as a result of the rebranding process (Bolton, 1992) whilst businesses are more on the focus. It is also referred in the literature as a common case residents’ needs being neglected because of tourists (Ooi & Pedersen, 2010), which is in accordance to our interviews’ findings, since both managers stressed the case of tourists as a factor of “unhappy” residents. All the above connected to the voice categorization in our perception defines “the feedback” that stems from residents and leads to the managers. Nico Mulder (22-04-2016) agreed that city brand managers do need this feedback in order not only to improve their strategy but mostly pursuing the satisfaction of the residents. As mentioned before, city stakeholders and especially residents make a contribution of vital importance to the city brand managers when they give feedback and provide

information (Hankinson, 2009). In the same sense, Baker (2007) supports that the opinions of the various stakeholders within a city should be heard and taken into account.

Now we can conclude that those attitudes that we have found are about “satisfaction” of the residents concerning the place and we clearly see that unhappy residents are a voice or as we mention “the voice”. As this category of the voice has a negative air, maybe it is even better to call them “unhappy”, connecting it thus to the model of Insch and Florek (2008), zooming in on their place satisfaction concept for residents. Place satisfaction in this model that lacks the connection to branding, or rebranding. Here we can provide an empirical place branding satisfaction concept based on our case. Therefore, we assume that place satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) shows a connection with branding activities carried out by the city brand managers. Plainly said, a brand consists of an identity, image and a logo. The identity stems from the core values, which are communicated by brand managers, however the image is how the stakeholders actually perceive and see the brand (Insch & Florek, 2008). Thus, a model that clearly distinguishes the happy and unhappy resident groups is presented.

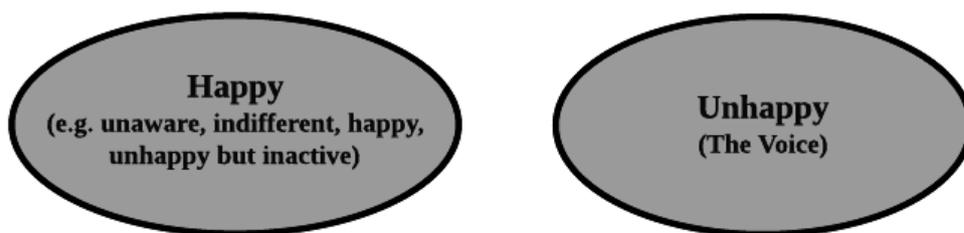


Figure: Model of Happy and Unhappy resident groups

When we follow Ryden (1993) and the trigger why people get so involved with the branding or rebranding of their city, except from living there, another factor is that place attachment creates emotional bonds, experiences and meanings which are all translated into physical features. Strengthened by Nico Mulder (22-04-2016), it is stated that “*yes it does exist and I am very proud that citizens are so critical of the city. I think that’s a good thing because it shows affection and involvement. If you have citizens caring less or not caring at all, it means that they do not care about the brand or the city. We want people to give feedback as it means that they are involved as this is part of the engagement we create with them*”. Thus we can say that criticism as the voice represents the brand Amsterdam and comes from affection and involvement with the city and brand of Amsterdam itself. This voice on activities and criticism is not seen as specific for branding strategies designed by the managers, as said Machteld (06-05-2016) and found by the netnography; “*For them, it is not a matter of rebranding, they just want to be happy. And we try to make them happy. They don’t think about the strategy and the marketing of Amsterdam and they are not interested. Maybe they do not know but there are lots of good things for them*”. This happy mentioned here is again about place satisfaction, which can be influenced by the branding of a place.

These arguments have led to the found connection between place satisfaction and place attachment, within a branding concept. Thus we see place brand satisfaction leading to place attachment. It is not necessary a new concept but it is a part of place satisfaction. Apparently, it can be incorporated with the co-creation model mentioned earlier, which will answer the sub-question *what are the attitudes and roles of residents in place branding process*. In conclusion, the attitudes and roles consist mainly of residents' unhappiness or dissatisfaction regarding the activities which are in their turn the rebranding efforts of the marketing managers, as the interests or understandings between these two stakeholder groups do not match, since the roles the residents fulfil here to shape the city or co-create it together consists of feedback. Hence, this negativity and movements should not be considered negative against the city but as the voice when the residents take up their role. The other role clearly distinguished here is the quite residents, that we named the "happy" which are unaware, happy, indifferent or unhappy but not actively speaking up. Hence the residents' role is to give feedback, which we see as "one-way traffic" in co-creation between managers and resident. Therefore, there is need for two-way traffic, leading to co-creation. Concluding, a model is presented of the found connection between place brand satisfaction and place attachment. Here the two way arrow is about the interaction between place brand satisfaction and place attachment. If one is place attached, this might influence his place brand satisfaction and the other way round.

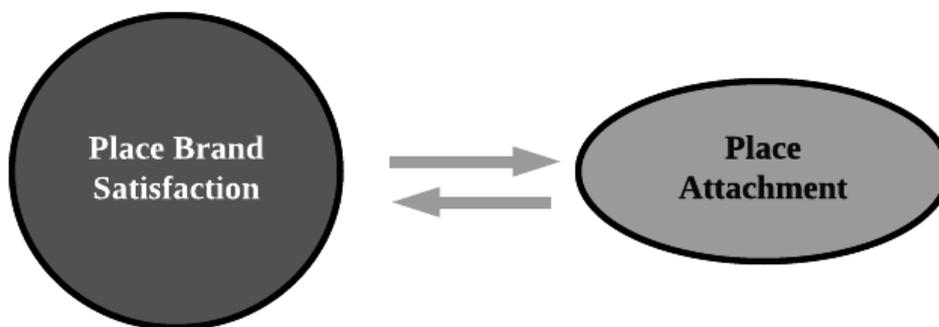


Figure: Place brand satisfaction leading to place attachment model

5.4 Place Brand Satisfaction Model

After having answered the two sub-questions we formed in the introduction, we provide in this part the answer to our main research question, which is *“how are co-creation efforts, which are created by city brand managers in the frame of rebranding, perceived and complemented by residents in the case of Amsterdam?”*

As it is already mentioned, in order to define the residents' attitude concerning the co-creation efforts that take place in their city, we have adapted the model of Place Satisfaction, by attaching to it the

“Brand” approach, since this research underlines Amsterdam as a brand. More specifically, we found that within the context we examine satisfaction, residents can either fall under the category of “happy” or “unhappy”. Our findings include mostly the “unhappy” cases, so the “happy” residents under this context should be further discussed in future research. In the adapted model we created, this categorization intervenes between place brand satisfaction and attachment since people that do express themselves with “the voice” groups for instance can be perceived as attached. This is totally supported by the interviews where the managers highlighted the criticism as something welcoming. Nevertheless, this can be a two-way relationship since residents who are place attached clearly show their attitude and positive or negative vibes. At the same time, this is all perceived as feedback, leading to the city brand managers, who are mostly the initiators of co-creation efforts, so as to make their citizens more and more satisfied. Those co-creation efforts along with other activities and marketing strategies are all part of the satisfaction that the city brand managers aim to offer to Amsterdammers. Therefore, the Place Satisfaction model is adapted for this thesis and specifically the case of Amsterdam in the figure below, called the “Place brand satisfaction model”.

A few elements of the model have been explained before and were used as to build up to this model. Notwithstanding, at this point it should be highlighted that co-creation efforts that are offered to the residents do not only stem from the city brand managers as such but also from other parties. Those parts encompass municipality, government, businesses as well as some non-profit organizations and platforms. Therefore, those “Others Parties” also make up activities which influence the way the city brand is perceived and thus the satisfaction of the residents as well. As netnography’s findings showed for all the stakeholders, both the city brand managers and the “others” attach a great amount of their importance to the tourists as well. This constitutes a noticeable finding since because of those activities residents complain the most and raise their voice. They perceive them as exclusively of a monetary nature that harms them, resulting in ‘the voice’ group. This is clearly proved from the statement that *“our challenge is to find the balance between residents and tourists”* that Machteld Ligtoet (06-05-2016) made, as well as Nico Mulder (22-04-2016) *“for some residents, this (tourists) is hard to cope with and this is the biggest thing nowadays in Amsterdam where we focus on and the municipality as well. We need to spread tourism in time and in place”*.

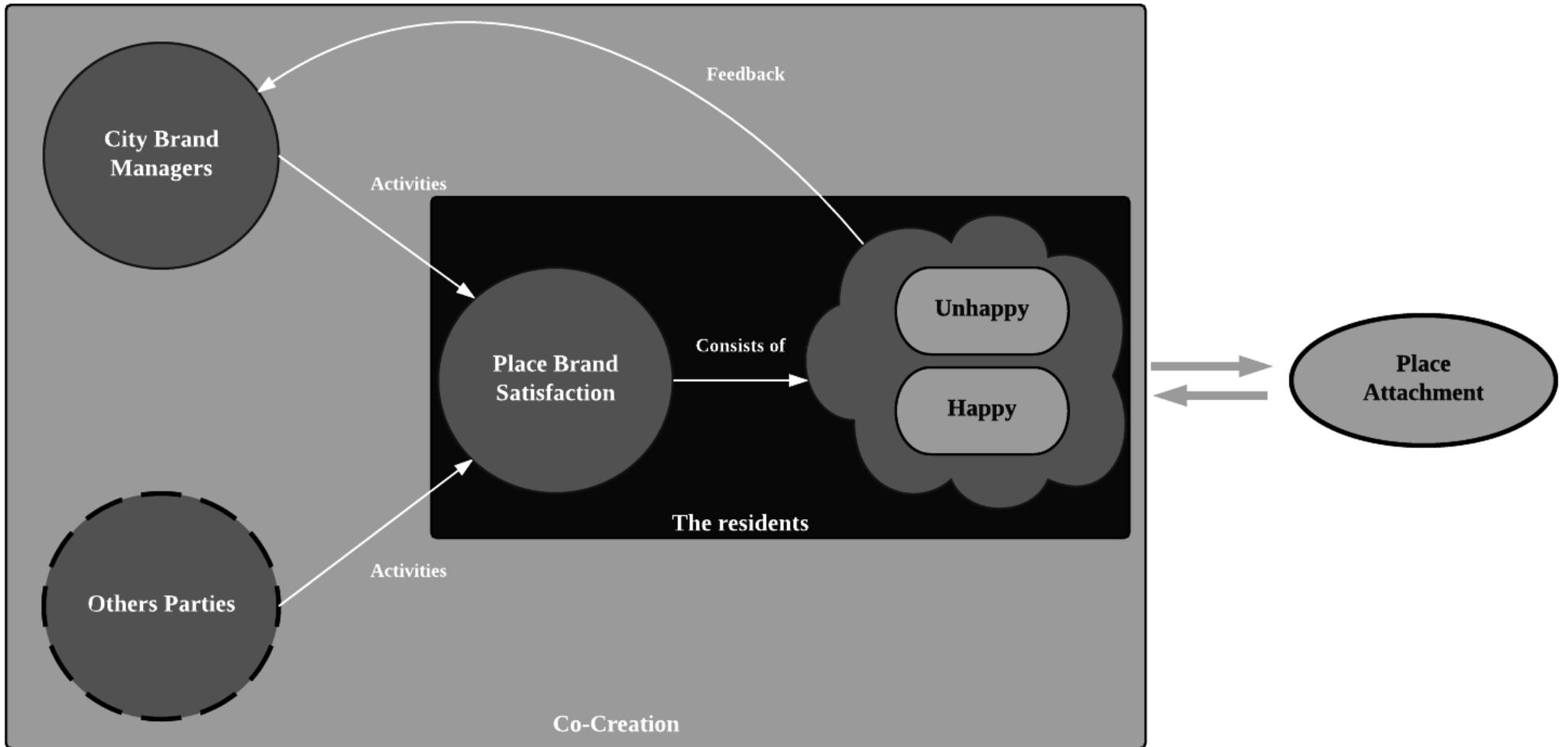


Figure: Place Brand Satisfaction Model

It is reinforced from our netnography that residents did not appear to comment or show emotions about their city, unless they are unhappy or annoyed. In literature it is also said that there can exist several differences amongst the different stakeholders (Ooi & Pedersen, 2010; Merrilees et al., 2009; Fiedler & Kirchgeorg, 2007). This shows a paradox in our research, as our initial point was to comment residents' perceptions but they ended up being limited into the ones of negative nature.

After having presented the complicated and interrelated relationships on the model above, we need to give an overall answer to the initial research question "*how are the co-creation efforts which are created by city brand managers in the frame of rebranding perceived and complemented by residents in the case of Amsterdam?*" Taking into account all the previous parts, it is reflected in this thesis that regarding the reactions of the residents and their perception of co-creation, they are "responsive" and give feedback to city brand managers mainly in the case where it is of negative nature. It can also be the case for their indifference or unawareness, since once they know, they are willing to participate. Therefore, those efforts are efficient when they are well-communicated and are able to make residents happier.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter a final conclusion will be given on the research statements and research question in combination with the empirical findings. Furthermore, the theoretical implications will be discussed followed by the managerial implications, giving recommendations that managers could use in their speciality. Finally, suggestions for future research and limitations of the research will be mentioned and discussed.

6.1 Overall conclusion

This research was set out in order to explain the concept of co-creation efforts in city rebranding and has identified categories of co-creation efforts initiated by city brand managers, residents and other stakeholders in the city of Amsterdam. We analysed residents' satisfaction and willingness to reply to these activities as well as their role in the co-creation process. In other words, the co-creation efforts were discussed and how they can result in resident place brand satisfaction. The general theoretical literature on this subject is inconclusive on several questions within the city branding discourse. The study sought to answer two of these questions separately before answering the main research question.

- 1. What are the co-creation efforts made by city brand managers for the residents, as part of the rebranding process?*
- 2. What are the attitudes and roles of residents in the place branding process?*

Shortly and respectively with the questions, it was concluded that there is a great variety and volume of co-creation activities organized currently by many parts in Amsterdam. They can have a leisure nature and entertaining character or give the residents the chance to improve their city in terms of environment, shared economy and general sustainability of the city. All of the activities we found give the residents the chance to feel part of their city and improve it, by contributing their personal elements. Nevertheless, the most noticeable example of co-creation we found through this research was proved to be the raise of voice of residents. This comes as an answer to the main research question *“how are the co-creation efforts which are created by city brand managers in the frame of rebranding perceived and complemented by residents in the case of Amsterdam”*. The findings showed that Amsterdammers do not express themselves to a satisfactory point, by participating actively in the efforts and events that target to unfold their creativity and love for the city. Strengthened by the interviews, this passive attitude can mean that they are indifferent for what is going on around them. Moreover, it might be the case that they are unaware about the opportunities that pop up around them. Interestingly, the key to co-creation seems to be the feedback residents provide to the city brand managers. More specifically, this feedback appears to be visible only in the cases of dissatisfied or

unhappy residents, when they dare to stand out and express themselves. As a conclusion therefore it could be said that the trigger of co-creation that makes residents talk and react is mainly their negative perception of things happening around them. Apparently, we came across a paradox throughout this research; having as a starting point the discovery of co-creation for residents and how they feel about it, it was eventually realized that they basically “feel” when they “disagree”. All the relationships stemming from the different parts are reflected on the Place Brand Satisfaction model that was adapted from existing literature and best matches with our findings, showing in accordance with the data how satisfaction is defined as part of co-creation.

6.2 Theoretical implications

Firstly, the place satisfaction framework suggests that place satisfaction is subject to “perceived quality”, “residents’ expectations” and “perceived value” and leads to “place attachment”. In this research it is argued why the place satisfaction model might be subject to more antecedents, especially if place brand satisfaction is seen as part of overall place satisfaction and thus be applicable to more brand-oriented cases. Furthermore, Zenker and Braun (2010, p.3) support that a place brand is “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”. Our research definitely found evidence that suggests that those associations can be expressed from residents through the co-creation concept, which constitutes in this sense the cornerstone of their perception of the city brand. Moreover, researchers have shown increased interest in stakeholder-based city branding (Acharya & Rahman, 2016). The place brand satisfaction framework adds to this increased interest and the literature as Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker (2013, p. 25) argue that a form of place branding that integrates the views, oppositions, and desires of residents is warranted. Finally, it is already known from the literature that place branding has to deal with conflicts and different interest between different groups of residents but also understand itself as a process of conflict management, where the aim is to integrate as much residents as possible (Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013, p.23). Through our research, it not only proved that indeed those conflicts do exist, but also a paradox showed up, meaning that residents’ dissatisfaction is strongly connected to the fact that city brand managers pay attention to the touristic activities rather than to the co-creation with the residents.

6.3 Managerial implications

City brand marketers might often believe that a city brand is a controllable tool that can be defined under certain strategies, neglecting often residents’ side. The theory and practice of city branding show considerable shortcomings in the role of the residents in the place branding process. Therefore, the

place brand satisfaction model could be utilised by city brand managers to understand what brings people to co-creation and thus attempting to keep them more satisfied. Consequently, they will achieve bringing residents closer to the city brand and transform them into real ambassadors of the city. The analysed and discussed insights could inform city brand practitioners in their work with place branding towards higher effectiveness.

6.4 Future research & Limitations

To delve further into this field and specifically of the adapted model, our study would possibly require a quantitative research testing the relationship between place brand satisfaction and co-creation efforts, which was proved to be difficult because of time constraints. Future research could also find out to what extent other stakeholders have influence through their activities on the place brand satisfaction model for residents.

Even though the thesis' results should be reliable and valid as argued in the methodological part, some limitations do exist. The proposed number of persons to include in a netnography is about 150-200 (Kozinets, 2010). In this research since we have around 100 comments this could be limiting to the findings. However, due to time constraints it was only possible to retrieve this amount of comments. Due to the lack of online findings, the netnography we conducted did not consist of real comments from the residents' side as such, but basically from the efforts that "reach" residents in a way by accepting that the journalist represents residents. Nevertheless, this led us to an unexpected paradox about their negative feedback which is worth exploring. Further research could hence include real comments distracted from residents so as to investigate in depth their opinions. Furthermore the analytical part of the brand managers is mainly based on two qualitative interviews from two different brand managers. Consequently, these interviews form the basis for the thesis view of brand managers and the amount of only two managers might not be fully representative for all. Even though these two managers were strategically chosen, the inclusion of more cases would have increased the reliability and validity of the study (Yin, 2015). Moreover, concerning the interviews, they were conducted through Skype as we mentioned in the methodology section, instead of face-to-face, fact that can be considered as a limitation since we might have misinterpreted some statements because of distance. To conclude, in our netnography we have included some Dutch data, since this is the mother tongue of one of the researchers. This can be seen as an obstacle and loss of meaning in the translation, but we tried to include mostly the English ones.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you very much for volunteering. We are Effrosyni and Frederique and we are currently doing our master thesis on Amsterdam's rebranding, examining the relationship between residents and city brand managers as stakeholders and as part of the rebranding process. We would like to ask for your permission in order to have this interview recorded. Have you read the informed consent form we mailed to you? Do you have any questions about this? The interview has a semi-structured form so if you have something more to add please feel free to do so. The structure of the interview will be consisting of two parts, one about the process of rebranding and one about you and residents as different stakeholders.

Warm-up questions

1. Could you tell us some things about your role within Amsterdam Marketing? How many years do you work there and what are your responsibilities?
2. Could you describe a bit Amsterdam Marketing as organization? How did it start and what was the initial target?
3. What are the core values of Amsterdam Marketing and the organizational culture?
4. What do you consider to be the main activities that Amsterdam Marketing successfully undertook within the last years?

(Re)branding questions.

1. How would you describe the term city rebranding?
2. Could you tell us how Amsterdam rebranded its city? What kind of tactic was used when rebranding?
3. Do you see a distinction from brand A, let's say the start before the rebranding, to brand B or let's say the way it is now?
4. What was according to you the main reason for rebranding the city of Amsterdam?
5. Whose initiative was it to rebrand Amsterdam? Did they give a really specific assignment or was it free for the marketing department? What kind of relationship do you have with this partner?
6. Did they also give information and data? What kind of information and data has been researched, before the rebranding started? As in qualitative and quantitative reports, figures about tourism and businesses.

7. In the literature they mention a gap between practitioners, such as you and academics, about that city brands are sometimes perceived to be the same as corporate brands, while in fact they are more complex. 1) What is your view on the complexity of the city brand? 2) Do you have any models that you use that are adopted from corporate brands?
8. Can you tell us about long-term and short-term views for the branding of Amsterdam?
9. How does the future look for the rebranding of Amsterdam?

Amsterdam Marketing as stakeholder

1. What are the main communication tools you have been using for Amsterdam rebranding? (I Amsterdam)
2. What are the newly introduced features in the reputation of Amsterdam that did not exist before your activity?
3. Do you think that some of your actions have favored some stakeholder groups rather than others? (business, municipality, tourists, residents)
4. What are your main challenges during city rebranding?

Residents as stakeholder

1. Is it clear in the eyes of residents that you have been rebranding the city of Amsterdam? If yes, what do you consider to be the most important rebranding activity in their eyes?
2. What are the main problems with residents that you had to deal with during the rebranding process?
3. What do you consider to be the basic needs that residents have when their city changes image?
4. Is there any difference between the intended image you wanted to create and the perceived image for the residents?
5. What are the actions that you take on in order to collaborate with residents? Co-creation?
5. How do you see residents as a) brand formers, b) ambassadors and c) place consumers?
6. What is your opinion for Word-of-Mouth within the rebranding process of a city? And for Amsterdam specifically?
7. Are you aware of the term 'co-creation'. Co-creation in recent literature is about that brands are not formed through traditional communications, but are co-created by a multitude of people who encounter and appropriate them. 1) Do you see this in back in your rebranding strategy? 2) Do you have co-creation projects going on?
8. In literature it is mentioned that residents as citizens are really important as they can 'make or break' the whole branding process. It is an obligation for place authorities to guarantee participation and opportunities for citizens to actively contribute to decision making processes.

There is support needed from citizens for the rebranding, however due to top-down this sometimes compromises a problem. What is your view on this and how is this handled? Is there also a case of counter branding campaigns? (citizens who group together to raise their voice).

End

1. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Informed consent form

Informed Consent Form *Msc International Marketing and Brand Management* thesis research

Please complete this form after you have read the points mention and read an explanation about the research.

Project Title: City rebranding- city brand managers and residents in the case of Amsterdam

Researcher: Effrosyni Tigka and Frederique Krop

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research. Before you agree to take part, the person organising the research must explain the project to you.

If you have any questions regarding the points mentioned, please ask the researcher before you to decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

Participant's Statement

I agree that:

- I have read the notes written above, and understand what the study involves.
- I understand that if I decide at any time that I no longer wish to take part in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw immediately.
- I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study.
- I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- I agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in this study.

Signature:

Date:

Statements:

- I understand that my participation will be recorded and I consent to use of this material as part of the project.
- I understand that the information I have submitted will be published as a report for Lund University School of Economics.
- I agree that my name, job title and place of work may be identified in the final report, and waive the right to anonymity for the purposes of this research.

Transcription of an interview

Introduction

- 1) ***To start with we would like you to tell us some things about your role in Amsterdam Marketing and the organization in general? What are your main responsibilities?***

I am the manager of press and communications and I have been doing this for six and a half years. In the organization we have around 130 people working, half of them working for the tourist information and the I Amsterdam store and all the others work for real marketing.

- 2) ***So, how did everything start for Amsterdam Marketing? What was the trigger and the initial target?***

It was a merger three years ago between three organizations that all promoted Amsterdam in a different way and they decided to merge together. So, Amsterdam Marketing started in 2013.

- 3) ***I guess that the main trigger was city rebranding since you noticed some kind of need for change, right?***

Yes. We did not just want to do the tourist sports. We do city marketing and we have to focus on visitors, inhabitants and businesses. All three have gotten attention.

City rebranding

- 4) ***How would you describe the term city rebranding?***

I am just wondering why are you calling it rebranding and not branding?

Interviewer: We call it rebranding because we basically want to show this change and focus on this change that happened in Amsterdam during the last years.

Well, it took us a lot of time and it did not happen from one day to another. We can say that I Amsterdam was one of the main contributions in rebranding. We have about 1200 partners and together we talk with all those partners. We talk with politicians, with inhabitants, with people who own hotels, museums, universities. Together we make the city and that was the main idea behind I Amsterdam. I Amsterdam means that when you are here you make the city a little bit different.

- 5) ***When going back and thinking of the main reason why Amsterdam had to be rebranded and based on what you told us before, what could you consider the main reason for this reputation crisis?***

It was not something specific. It went slowly. We wanted to show that we are here for the city. Every city changes and thus Amsterdam changed. So we focus on the future to overcome all the problems, in collaboration with Amsterdam's Municipality.

- 6) ***In literature some academics support that city rebranding can be perceived like corporate rebranding whilst there are others saying that city rebranding is much more complex. What***

is your opinion about that, could you face Amsterdam's rebranding as a corporate rebranding or should you add some more complex attributes?

The branding of the city is different than the branding of the company because the city is alive and the city is made by people who live there and not by a management team. So for sure we had to make a plan to incorporate all those people.

Stakeholders

Amsterdam Marketing

7) *What are the most efficient communication tools for Amsterdam's rebranding?*

We have various communication tools. We have the portal which is I Amsterdam.com with more than 1 million views per month, we have a magazine which is called the I mag, which is six times issued a year and it's in English, we have a Dutch magazine which comes out 11 times a year for inhabitants, we have instagram, twitter, facebook and of course we communicate with all the partners of the city.

8) *During all those actions, could you tell that there are some stakeholder groups that are more favored than others? Where do you target yourselves, businesses, tourists for example or every group has the same percentage of your attention?*

We used to focus a bit more on the visitors but now we focus more on the inhabitants. It is normal as then years ago we wanted more visitors but now we care more about the inhabitants. There are so many visitors that we have to find a balance.

9) *What are your main challenges?*

The balance that I just mentioned is the main challenge for now.

Residents

10) *How do you think that residents consider the whole process of rebranding? Is there a certain point that made them change the perception they had for Amsterdam?*

Since we changed gradually, they did not see that happening. For them, it is not a matter of rebranding, they just want to be happy. And we try to make them happy. They don't think about the strategy and the marketing of Amsterdam and they are not interested. Maybe they do not know but there are lots of good things for them.

11) *What are the basic problems that you face regarding the residents?*

That is probably that they don't know. They don't have the information; they don't know what the visitors bring to the city. Some of them are annoyed because it's so crowded but they don't realize that tourists are not only a matter of money for the city. It is also that all the museums are full and so on. We want the inhabitants to understand what the visitors bring.

12) *Is there any particular difference between the image that you want to show to the residents and the one that they perceive?*

We want to show the truth city and we don't want to show a Disney world or plastic tulips. We want to show the city the way it is. But yes there is a difference since they perceive it in a different way which is normal.

13) What actions do you offer to the residents so that they collaborate with you?

We check what's happening on facebook and twitter by trying to explain things to them and make it smoother but we do a lot of things for them. We try to make them participate more in the cultural things going on, concerts, museums etc. We make the inhabitants proud and important of the city, by participating actively and collaborate with us. We embrace all the events and make them stronger with our communication.

14) Are they willing to participate in the offered activities regarding co-creation?

First, they should know what we can offer. They are people, it's their city and it should remain like this. We offer all sorts of projects for them and yes they are very willing to participate.

15) What is your opinion about Word of Mouth within the rebranding process of a city?

That goes really well and it is based on social media. People participate and they share so that's good, we are satisfied.

16) Concerning residents, in literature they are mentioned to "make or break" within the rebranding process, so there is a great need that authorities guarantee to them opportunities. Are there campaigns where residents group together to raise their voice or something like this?

I don't think they can really "make or break". What they can do is using their vote and choosing politicians but not concerning branding. I would say that it's tourists that can achieve that. They are quite powerless and it's important to talk with them and give them an opportunity as together we make the city!

Appendix B

Comment	Category	Concept	Source
But sadly the Mayor of Amsterdam has recently launched an attack on the Beer Bike concept and is threatening to ban this popular source of pleasure in downtown areas of the city. Labelling them a “nuisance”, the Mayor is planning an illegal ‘ghettoization’ of Beer Bikes that would banish them to the fringes of the city and force many operators to close. Less than 4 complaints a month does not seem to be sufficient grounds for a ban.	The Voice	Residents’ initiative	Amsterdo.com
For citizens, meeting new people from all around the globe has never been more easy. For tourists, this is maybe the most fun (and free way) to discover the city through the eyes of an Amsterdammer. Once you spot one, all you need to do is scream “BACKIE” at the top of your lungs, and make sure to hop on!	Leisure	Residents’ initiative	http://popupcity.net/yellow-backie-lets-tourists-see-amsterdam-from-the-back-of-locals-bikes/
The Sustainable District Heating project is part of the European City-zen initiative, which is designed to demonstrate innovations related to smart grids, district heating networks and improving the sustainability of houses. The project is focused on ordinary city districts such as Nieuw-West in Amsterdam and EcoCité in Grenoble. Residents of – and visitors to – the two districts play a key role in the solutions. This innovative approach dovetails with the ambitions of Amsterdam Smart City and Grenoble EcoCité, two of Europe’s largest Smart Energy testing grounds.	Sustainability	Residents’ initiative	http://amsterdamsmartcity.com/projects/detail/id/86/slug/city-zen-sustainable-district-heating
Join now	Sustainability	Residents’ initiative	http://amsterdamsmartcity.com/ne

<p>The municipality wants to facilitate a circular economy as good as possible. Therefore we want to know what ideas and initiatives, large or small, you (residents and businesses in the city and region) have. We also want to know what opportunities and obstacles exist.</p> <p>What do you think? Let us know through the contact form. Based on the responses, the municipality determines what is needed from the government to support the transition towards a circular economy. Comments coming in before May 10, 2016 , will be taken along with the government's response to the investigation 'Amsterdam Circular. A vision and roadmap for the city and the region.</p>	<p>ty</p>	<p>les' initiative</p>	<p>ws/detail/id/924/slug/think-about-the-circular-economy</p>
<p>A city is a wonderfully complex environment with a diverse set of challenges. With topics ranging from transportation to energy and from education to the environment, there is a need for a generation of creative problem solvers. By involving young citizens early on, we can benefit from their fresh perspective. We furthermore have a chance of triggering their long-lasting engagement and cooperation for the city of tomorrow.</p>	<p>The Voice</p>	<p>Residents' initiative</p>	<p>http://amsterdamsmartcity.com/projects/detail/id/101/slug/nxtcity-amsterdam</p>