Rethinking Place Branding and Place Making Through Creative and Cultural Quarters

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Abstract

Cultural and creative quarters—from historic districts to new digital hubs—feature heavily in economic development and cluster studies, but their role in place making and branding is only recently being discovered. Essentially production based, they also tend to locate in industrial areas of cities which are also the subject of regeneration and transformation. As cities seek to widen their brand offer and diversify the range of destinations to a discerning visitor and residential market (local, domestic and international), these areas, which combine work and play, represent a distinct place brand. Through city case studies from several countries, this chapter critiques the emergence of the creative quarter through organic place making and their value as a place brand in areas of the city which have not traditionally been considered a destination. How far policy and planning can support and protect these post/new industrial quarters is also discussed, including the concomitant risks of gentrification and commodification that branding can infer.

Introduction

City branding strategies and the practice of place-making have a wide range of rationales and effects. They may inter-act or more often represent quite separate processes and operate at different macro and micro spatial scales. Cities are said to act as a kind of 'super-brand' implicating all the brands relating to the qualities of everyday urban life (Baumann et al. 2002). The extent to which branding is a conscious and explicit goal of urban development is also variable and often an indirect effect arising from other strategies, in part due to the essentially incremental nature of most land use and economic (as well as social and cultural) development, but also to the lack of awareness of branding as a concept and approach to city development and planning (Evans 2006). The treatment of cities as commodities in need of marketing and selling themselves (Ward 1998) is commonly rationalised for example by Harvey's perceived shift from managerial to entrepreneurial urban governance (1979 and cf. Hubbard and Hall 1998) in response to the twin forces of post-industrialisation and globalisation, and the growth of a so-called network society (Castells 1996). However as Tuan earlier observed (1977), boosterism through major projects and cultural facilities has been long practiced—from pre to post-industrial times—and it would be simplistic to paint city management as a free market process at the cost of local amenities and governance. As more pluralist regime theories suggest (Stoker and Mossberger1994~~5~~), the reality is more complex with quality of life, distributive equity and local economic development still counterbalancing concerns at city level, notwithstanding city branding efforts which whilst occasionally high profile, are generally incidental to urban planning and development, outside of specific sites, events and regeneration zones.

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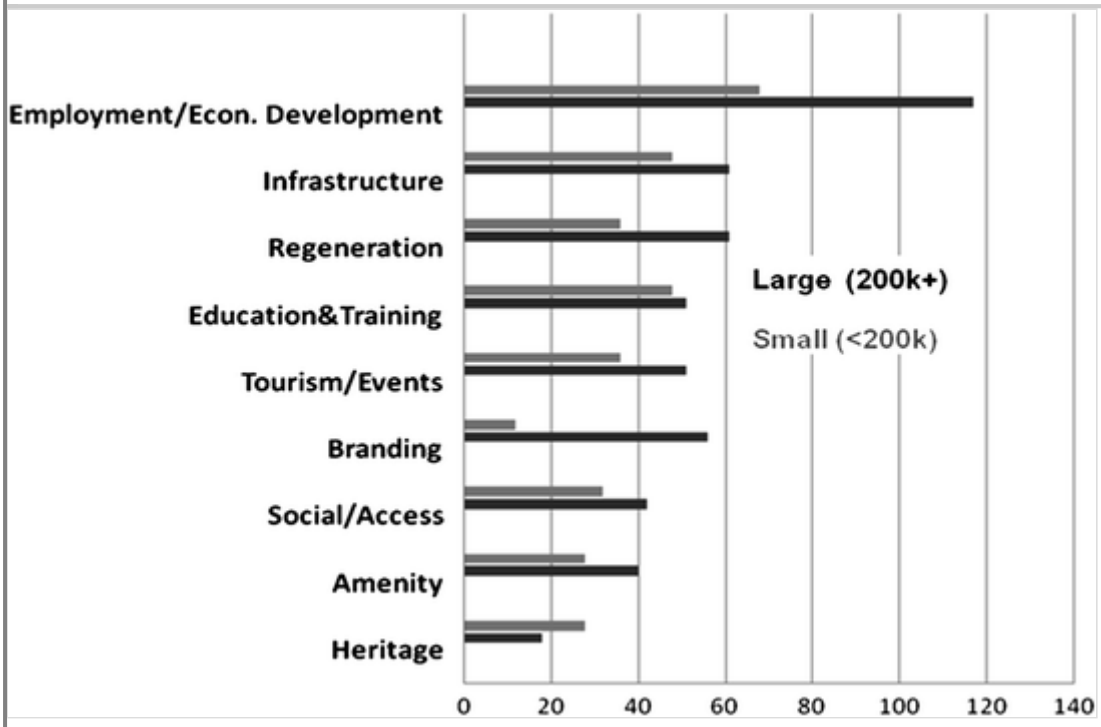
Creative Cities and Branding

In an international study of creative city strategies (Evans 2009a) branding in large cities ranked behind economic development/job creation, infrastructure and regeneration as the prime rationales for public investment and policies (Fig. 10.1). Investment in the built environment and area-based regeneration does of course provide opportunities for re-branding and place-making, and as this chapter reveals, the phenomenon of economic development through area-based clusters has presented new place-brands around creative 'production' quarters and districts. In the case of smaller cities however, branding was the least frequent reason for investing in creative city campaigns and strategies (Evans 2012). This creative 'meta-brand' is perceived by smaller cities who often lack the economic, political or cultural clout to engage in city branding, as either being outside of credible reach, or rejected altogether, along with Florida's notion of a footloose 'creative class' (2005) which is seen to be at odds with vernacular and endogenous culture and community creativity. Here, branding is more closely associated with heritage (Fig. 10.1), and in some cases, a more collaborative, 'polycentric' network of regional towns (Evans and Bagwell 2011; Evans 2012) and 'creative regions' (Chapain and Comunian 2010).

Fig. 10.1

Creative city policy rationales in large and small cities (*Source* Evans 2012)



From Product to Place-Branding

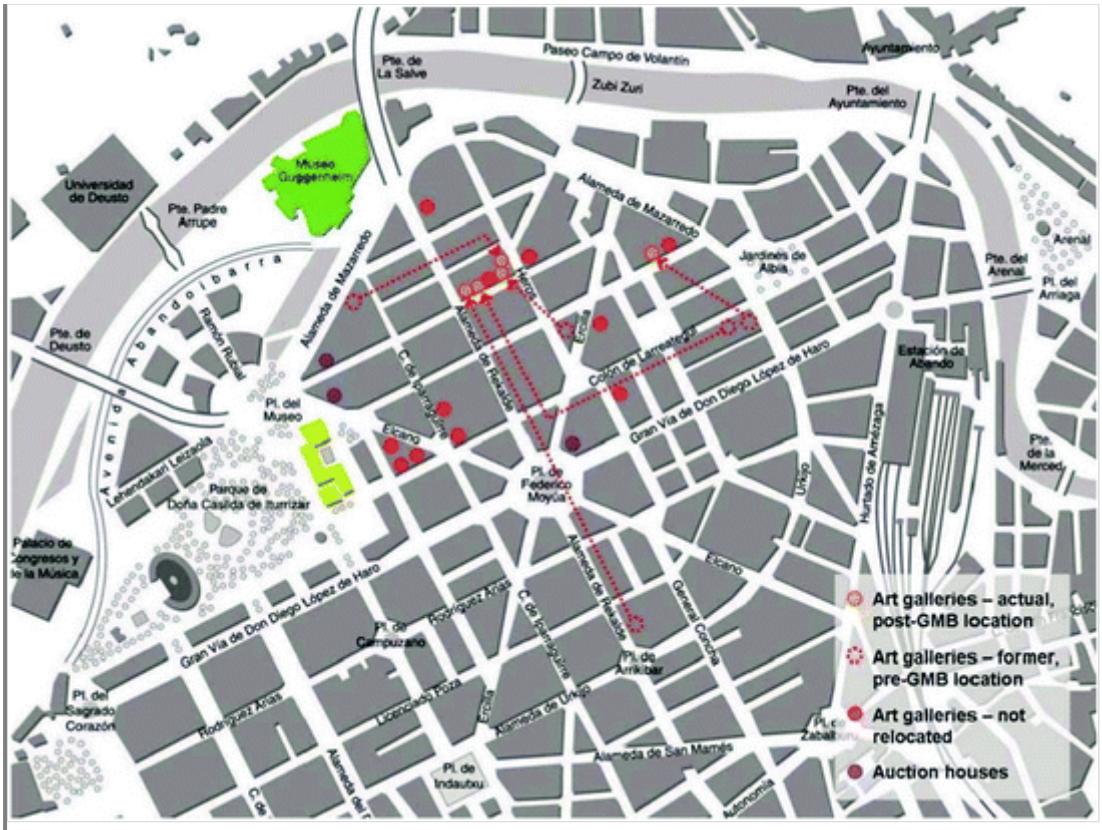
Models of city and place branding generally draw their references from product and corporate branding as an extension of marketing strategies that address the product life-cycle decline-renewal challenge (Butler 1980). In this sense towns and cities, and specific areas in need of 'regeneration and renewal' that face post-industrial or other structural socio-economic change, have been presented with the branding option as a response to the competitive-authentic city dialectic. How this is achieved and sustained is the stuff of city branding literature with results reflected in proprietorial branding and related indices, league tables and measurement formulae. Here the various models attempt to disaggregate or 'reverse engineer' the key factors and variables that provide the brand (marketing) mix—the elements that together present the brand

value and power of a place. These combine hard and soft infrastructure with historical and cultural amenities and qualities—which themselves are hard to quantify and value—values that also vary according to the viewpoint of resident, visitor, investor, media and politician. As Zenker maintains (2011), place identity (a wider concept than the "brand") influences the perception of the target audience, however *prior* perceptions (and their historic and contemporary sources) also influence the identity of a place as seen both internally and externally, and these are often reinforced through city marketing images of urban landscapes. In urban space, and therefore in place-making efforts, the 'social production' that Lefebvre observed (1974) also stresses the essential experiential nature of the relationship with our everyday environment, and our identification with discrete places and spaces. In this sense we do not "use" space or our urban environment as "consumers" (e.g. of branded products), but we experience it individually, productively (i.e. work) and collectively, albeit with diminishing influence over the (re)construction of the public spaces we inhabit.

The topic of interest in this chapter is that of the urban quarters that have been recreated and appropriated through branding and city marketing strategies, which present particular urban experiences. In city branding models, the cityscape (or 'urban landscape') is characterised in several ways: as 'place physics' (Anholt 2006); and 'spatial picture', as distinct from specific amenities and historical and cultural facilities such as theatres, museums and parks (Grabow ~~et al.~~ 1998~~5~~). Kotler et al. (1999) prioritise design ('place as character') as distinct from 'infrastructure' and 'attractions' in their place improvement and marketing approach, whilst Ashworth and Voogd (1990) first proposed a 'geographical marketing mix' to capture the 'whole entity of the place-products' (Kavaratzis 2005, p. 336) with 'spatial-functional' measures one of four instruments in this mix. Infrastructure also typically includes transport systems and facilities, hospitality and increasingly connectivity, with the latter used as part of city promotional strategies in 'smart' cities such as Seoul as well as in digital highways and "free wifi here" zones. However, despite the physical imagery and changing skylines strongly associated with city and place branding and destination marketing (Hauben et al. 2002), it is interesting to note that in Zenker's (2011) analysis of 18 place branding studies (2005–2010) architecture, buildings and city spaces were largely absent in the brand elements cited ('physical' or 'built' environment and 'architecture' as 'positive asset' are mentioned in three studies). The surveys on which these studies were based tended to focus on generalised or intangible associations (culture, historical, 'buzz' etc.) rather than specific physical or spatial attributes. This is in part self-fulfilling however, since the survey methods used were all text-based questionnaires with no use of visual aids or images as prompts or references, or any ranking of specific buildings and sites. It would be unlikely if a brand awareness study of Bilbao ranked 'art museums and galleries' as its key element (it has several), whereas Gehry's Guggenheim Art Museum building would dominate the rationale to visit and in city brand awareness (Plaza et al. 2013). In city branding, the design(er) prefix indicates the strength of a particular architectural city identity (and legacy), for instance 'Gaudi Barcelona', 'Mackintosh Glasgow', along with the more recent (and thus less diversified) 'Guggenheim Bilbao'. In practice, these cultural representations are often identified with and clustered in particular areas and quarters of the city (Fig. 10.2).

Fig. 10.2

'Guggenheim Bilbao' gallery cluster (*Source* Plaza 2009)



The remainder of this chapter will therefore critique the changing place of the urban quarter in city branding strategies and place identification, including the extent to which city brands rely on both pre-existing spatial and physical assets and the extent to which new/adapted buildings and quarters have helped to create or reinforce place brands (Evans 2009b). First a typology of the forms by which city development manifests itself through urban design and quarters are summarised, with notable examples. This is followed by more detailed cases of urban cultural and creative quarters that have emerged over time, or that have undergone dramatic or significant redevelopment—and which have been used to create or extend brand image and identity.

Branded City Landscapes and Place-Making by Design

The physical place-branding efforts of cities—national and regional capitals, historic and heritage towns and now smaller and peripheral cities (Evans 2012)—appears to have been following a familiar path of two types of intervention in the urban environment. These are not exclusive and one can feature in the other, and vice versa notably in mega-event and regeneration project sites:

1. Iconic architecture—new and refurbished buildings, e.g. cultural facilities, public buildings, mixed use developments (e.g. Brindley Place, Birmingham), offices/towers; shopping malls; transport interchanges; public art/installations; extensions of historic sites (e.g. Acropolis, Athens).

2. Urban design and quarters—public realm improvements; parks and open spaces/squares; cultural, heritage or creative quarters; transport and routes/trails; area-based cultural, housing and mega-event-led regeneration.

Whilst their impact may seem similar, particularly where these engage in international architecture, design and brand marketing strategies, this takes place as part of a trajectory that is both particular, often long term and gradual, and therefore received and interpreted and

experienced differently in different locations and through different planning and socio-cultural systems (Evans 2009a). Although incremental development is the norm, punctuated by major building and urban design projects (e.g. transport: air, road, rail, bridges; major regeneration zones), city extensions and occasionally new cities and urban settlements do provide the opportunity for 'zero-base' city identity-building. In this case, the rationale and identity is still largely set by political or commercial imperatives. For example Brazil's new capital Brasilia built in a climatically inhospitable region, and deliberately breaking from the post-colonial capital Rio to mark and celebrate a Corbusian 'Radiant' city through appropriately modernist architecture, grand public buildings and public spaces (Dekker 2000). Several Arab states also vie against one another, drawing on their diminishing oil funds to diversify their economies through culture and tourism and join the international art establishment. An example is Abu Dhabi's Guggenheim and Louvre franchises in a newly created cultural district Saadiyat Island, designed by Gehry and Nouvel respectively—this 'cultural cluster' will also house the Zayed National Museum designed by Foster as part of a $27 billion development.

Aside from these extreme cases of 'place-making', urban extensions to over-crowded historic core city centres also require a discrete identification, that is a part of or even separate from the existing city, both to justify public investment, attract new residents and businesses. In some cases this may be presaged by regeneration-led mega-events or the opportunity to experiment with design and building styles without (or at least minimising) conflict with the existing morphology or vernacular style. Examples include the Ørestad extension to Copenhagen; London's 2012 Olympic Park/Village (open to the public in 2014); Barcelona's Extension—site of 'Universal Forum EXPO' 2000; and Shanghai's 2010 EXPO site (Fig. 10.3). In contrast to the urban sprawl seen in American and Chinese cities for instance, these extensions still retain the potential for place making and sub-regional branding within the overall city brand, not least through mega-events.

Fig. 10.3

Russian Pavilion,Shanghai EXPO 2010 (*Source* Author)

The literature on iconic building projects is now extensive (cf. Ponzini and Nastasi 2011; Glendinning 2010~~2~~; Foster 2011) and whilst their brand impact and significance is still under-developed and surprisingly less considered in city branding literature (Dinnie 2011~~0~~) they do represent the most visible manifestation of city branding. On the other hand, the less iconic urban design and place-making associated with established and emerging cultural and creative quarters represent a new aspect of city branding that is on one hand more organic and arguably authentic, and on the other hand more integrated with the post-industrial urban economy and therefore creative city aspirations (Evans 2009a, b). The cultural or creative quarter can thus build on

symbolic and heritage legacies, and also create new destinations and experiences in areas that have not formerly been identified as places of interest to visitors, or be part of a city brand portfolios.

Urban spatial interventions that have come to reflect branding aspirations and which are adopted in city branding portfolios can be seen in several forms (Table 10.1). These are increasingly linked and are not therefore exclusive, with events and festivals spawning new (iconic) structures and quarters of various types imposing branded design and wayfaring and legibility images through signage, street furniture, banners and other markers. Open spaces including parks and squares are frequently used as focal points for events and celebrations, sculpture and other art and media installations, in some cases a rediscovery of their 'pleasure garden' past. They can also anchor cultural quarters and entertainment zones, ranging from the spectacular, permanent to the everyday and ephemeral.

Table 10.1

Forms of urban design and quarters

Spatial form	Key types	Examples
Urban design	Squares, routes/avenues, parks/trails, pedestrian zones, public art, wayfaring	Centenary Square (Birmingham); La Villette (Paris); Olympic Park (London); High Line (New York), Barcelona waterfront
Ethnic quarters	Area/street-naming, signage, gates, street furniture, festivals	'Chinatowns', 'Curry Miles'; Banglatown (East London); Arab Monde and Musee du Quai Banly (Paris); Little Portugal (Toronto)
Heritage and cultural quarters	World heritage sites, heritage quarters and historic sites, arts districts/culture parks	Saltaire (Bradford); Lace Market, (Nottingham); Distillery District (Toronto); Kreuzberg (Berlin); Hua Shang Culture Park (Taipei, Taiwan); 789 Art district (Beijing)
Creative industry quarters	Artist/crafts studios, managed workspaces/incubators, digital media/techno parks	SoHo 'Loft living' (New York); Liberty Village, (Toronto); Digital Shoreditch (East London); Amsterdam Noord; Eagle Yard/Adlershof, (Berlin); Sheffield cultural industries quarter

Urban Design

Urban design is a now common hybrid practice between architecture and planning, manifested at varying scales—from area masterplans, urban quarters to new urban settlements, 'villages' and even entire cities and city extensions (Table 10.1). Not limited to buildings or single sites, urban design also focuses on street layout, mobility/transport, and development schemes also include public squares, parks and open spaces and the relationship between the built environment and the public realm. Place-making takes the more meso level urban design process and focuses design interventions at a more micro-level on specific locations and sites. Since place-making and branding is arguably the public face of the city and its projection to its residents and other dwellers, urban design has gained more significance in city branding in providing welcoming and attractive places and in creating local destinations that together make up the 'geographical marketing mix'. Indeed, since building development is primarily a private/commercial activity (by landowners, developers), public space is one of the few areas on which city and local authorities can influence the quality and primary usage—a role and power that is also diminishing as privatisation of public space expands through shopping and office malls, and even street activity such as café culture and sponsored space. Spatial design in this sense is important in ensuring both

the effective flow and distribution of people whatever their purpose (resident, commuter, tourist), and in creating public spaces for gatherings, formal events and for marking key nodes and quarters of the city. The redesign of public squares has thus been prioritised in many city centres, as part of urban renaissance, traffic/pedestrianisation and place-making schemes, for example Trafalgar Square, London; Times Square, New York; Centenary Square, Birmingham; Peace Square, Sheffield, and Plein 1992, Maastricht (Fig. 10.4)—to name a few (Corbett 2004).

Fig. 10.4

Centenary square and new library, Birmingham; Peace Square, Sheffield; Plein 1992 and new library, Maastricht (*Source* Author)

Indeed there are very few cities and large towns that do *not* have urban design schemes underway or planned, in response to policies, demographics and land use change reflecting shifts in residential, retail and commercial markets and to aspirations towards more sustainable 'compact' cities on the one hand, and economic development towards service and creative industries and related tourism activity on the other. City branding is effected by all of these, but particularly by the distinctiveness and qualities offered by the physical environment in all its forms, and by venues and destinations which should add value through the content and experience they provide.

Quarters

A particular device in urban design and planning is the spatial concept of *quarters*—dividing areas of the city into discrete and congruent zones that reflect their land use, morphology, economic and social mix. This is resonant with older medieval times, where quarters specialised in particular crafts, cultural or ethnic activities, often outside of city/guild controls e.g. as in Clerkenwell and South Bank areas of London (Evans 2004). According to new urbanist Krier: 'the urban quarter is a city-within-a-city …it contains the qualities and features of the whole …provides for all the periodic local urban functions within a limited piece of land …and are zoned block-wise, plot-wise or floor-wise. An urban quarter must have a centre and a well-defined readable limit' (1995, in Montgomery 2013, p. 339). This can build on pre-existing areas notably historic or heritage, business or university districts, retail and entertainment zones. From a countervailing perspective, one of the leading architect-planners Rem Koolhaus claims that: 'progress, identity, the city and the street are things of the past' (1995, cited in Glendinning 2010, p. 114). So cities are faced with the individualism and 'karaoke architecture' (Evans 2003) promoted by international firms, or a plan-led approach to urban design—a conflict perhaps between 'starchitect-led' city branding (Ponzini and Nastasi 2011) and place-making (Moor and Rowland 2006).

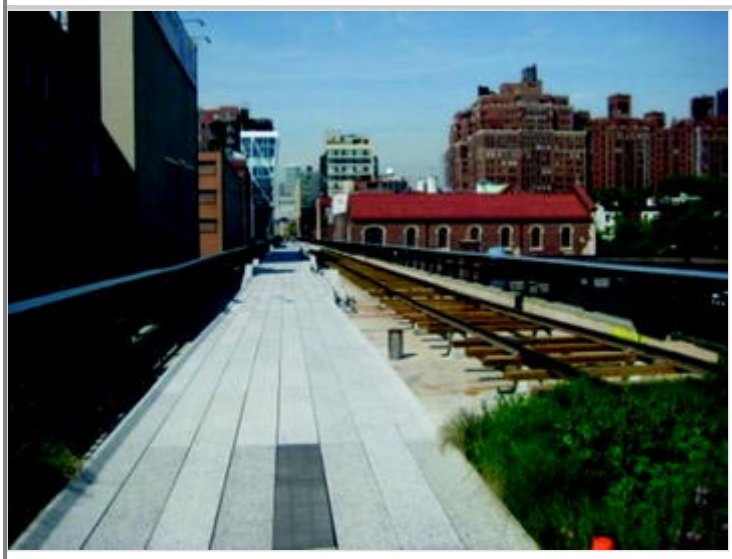
As well as a planning and development mechanism allowing for effective zoning of a city, quarters are also used as an area regeneration, conservation and economic development strategy. The latter includes destination and tourism management, which encompasses area branding around heritage, entertainment or other visitor-oriented districts (Roodhouse 2010). Conservation areas have been used since the 1960s to protect and preserve the built environment and to a lesser

extent, usage and occupation, with historic building and heritage listing or grading used by planners and governments to preserve heritage assets. This includes national and international heritage status with World Heritage Site inscription awarded to a growing list of cultural sites worldwide. Urban heritage sites seeking and gaining listing are also increasing as the value of and imperative for conservation intensifies. City branding therefore looks to the historic stock and heritage sites as key elements in visual imagery and brand associations. Entire cities claim 'historic' or 'heritage' city status (Evans 2010), where this represents a significant part of its identity, but in reality the heritage element is only a minority of the built environment and local economy. Attempts to 'modernise' the image and identity of historic cities into 'creative class' cities (Florida 2005) can also create a backlash from residents (Evans 2009a) and undermine an established brand, such as in Bruges 2002 'European Capital of Culture' (ECoC) where a clear conflict emerged between resident and tourist identification with its historic character—the very reason that ECoC and hallmark event status was granted in the first place—and the bid organiser's motivation to change the image and cultural profile of the city as a competitive cosmopolitan place (Boyko 2008; Evans 2014).

In terms of branded landscapes, heritage quarters are also the subject of further development, both to extend the quarter and modernise its facilities. For example the final 'fourth grace' mixed-used development in Liverpool's World Heritage Site; the modernisation of The Lighthouse Grade I-listed Macintosh building, Glasgow; and the long term, if less than authentic, 'completion' (due 2026) of Gaudi's *Sagrada Familia* in Barcelona. Reclaiming industrial heritage has also benefited cultural institutions with newly renovated iconic buildings that add to the branded cityscape, but also to urban amenity through regenerated open space and routes. For instance, New York's greening of the meat-packing rail freight route—the *High Line*—has created a newly accessible green route above the streets of the city and significantly opened up the district to leisure/night time activities. This has added a new attraction, an evolving amenity for residents, and a new image for this part of the city (Fig. 10.5).

Fig. 10.5

High line, New York (*Source* Author)



A particular heritage area with both symbolic and cultural economic significance is the *Ethnic Quarter*—designating a residential/commercial/cultural neighbourhood through its association with a migrant community—from the ubiquitous Chinatown and Jewish Quarter (or "Ghetto"), to *Little*—Italy (New York), Portugal (Toronto), Germany (Bradford), Tokyo (Los Angeles),

Vietnam (San Francisco) and so on. In many cases the ‘oriental’ communities have long moved on—or were never there, e.g. *Barrio Chinois*, Barcelona—but their heritage is manifested through signage, street furniture, place/road naming and banners and residual activities such as restaurants. These are important for city branders however, since they provide an eclectic offer and diversity that the city may otherwise lack and this may also be reinforced through annual community festivals and events, e.g. Diwali, ethnic food festivals. An extreme ethnic quarter makeover is seen for example in East London’s rebranded ‘Banglatown’ (Shaw 2011), centred on Brick Lane “curry quarter” in an area that has experienced successive waves of migration and occupation over several centuries—from Methodists, Huguenots, Jews, to Bangladeshis and now young gentrifiers in this city fringe location (Fig. 10.6).

Fig. 10.6

Banglatown, East London (*Source* Author)

Cultural and Creative Quarters

Although less visible than heritage and ethnic quarters, an emerging city quarter that is being drawn into the branding mix is the cultural or creative industries production district (Evans 2009b, 2004). Whilst residual cultural production has featured within heritage quarters, e.g. Rope Quarter, Liverpool; Lace Market, Nottingham; Cultural Industries Quarter, Sheffield; Bethanien Art quarter Kreuzberg, Berlin—due to the availability of cheaper and flexible industrial premises and consumption spaces (art and entertainment, cafes, clubs, street markets etc.)—the value of creative production in new sectors such as the digital economy has extended the city brand landscape. Quarters that have achieved international brand status include Digital Shoreditch/Silicon Roundabout in East London (below) and emerging digital clusters in post-industrial areas in Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris, New York. These production zones pre-occupied with generating the new social and creative media (i.e. mobile apps, video games, web services—Foord 2013) thus combine the buzz and scene associated with “cool cities”, alongside a vibrant club and cosmopolitan culture—directly addressing a young and mobile market. Their visual imagery encompasses graffiti/street art, original, large scale billboard adverts, digital displays and artworks on and around buildings—rich material for visual branding and destination marketing.

These new industrial creative hubs also use the traditional trade fair and exhibition as cultural events which transcend the sector itself, engaging in media and entertainment, fringe, showcasing and public engagement activities. Design Festivals and Architecture Biennales (Fig. 10.7) now supplement the art biennales and fashion weeks to bring visitors to production quarters, unusual venues and in some cases permanent venue sites, emulating earlier models such as Milan's annual Fiera and Venice's biennale. Examples include the annual Design Mai (May) festival in Berlin and Open Studios events in London—both organised by artists and designers using mapped trails linking studios, design shops and workshops in 'hidden' creative areas of the city. In city branding terms these new production quarters are seldom planned or institutionally developed (attempting to do this risks just that, institutionalisation and likely failure). This leaves city branding and economic development in an intelligence role (spotting where these areas emerge) and supporting their independent development and operation through local networks, key events and joint marketing.

Fig. 10.7

London Architecture Biennale, Clerkenwell (*Source* Author)

Exemplars—Established and Emerging

The following extends the coverage of selected cultural and creative quarters in terms of their evolution and distinction (Evans 2009b), as well as lessons arising for place-makers. Examples range from historic/heritage districts and business improvements areas; redesigned public spaces/squares; established and evolving creative digital quarters, to emerging creative zones—all in their different ways, extending and reinforcing their city cultural brands and destination offer, whilst fulfilling key economic development and cultural amenity opportunities for city residents.

The Distillery Historic District, Toronto

The potential symbolic and economic value of former industrial heritage buildings is now well recognised (Zukin 1995). They can provide attractive and interesting spaces to accommodate creative and cultural activity—both exhibition/entertainment and production-based. As Jane Jacobs argued: 'old ideas can sometimes use new buildings' (1961, p. 188). New ideas must use old buildings'. Jacobs herself had emigrated from the USA to Toronto in the late-1960s and her

seminal *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) formed the basis of her continued interest in urban design, mixed-use and the importance of a vibrant urban environment.

The Distillery District is strategically located linking the city's downtown and waterfront areas with a mixed use/tenure neighbourhood, as promoted by Jacobs. Toronto's Distillery District, once home to the Gooderham and Worts Distillery which finally closed in 1990 and now a national historic site, was redeveloped as a pedestrian-only village entirely dedicated to arts, culture, and entertainment. Developed by Cityscape Development Inc., the district is now home to restaurants, galleries, event spaces, lofts and condominiums, cafés, and independent retail boutiques selling creative products ranging from jewellery to furniture to photographic services (Fig. 10.8). The Distillery District also houses one of the city's largest affordable work space developments for artists and arts organizations operated by the not-for-profit Artscape organisation (Evans 2001). After a C$3 million renovation between 2001 and 2003, 60 tenants moved into the Case Goods Warehouse and Cannery Building. These include artist and designer-maker studios, non-profit, theatre, dance, and arts organizations (Gertler et al. 2006).

Fig. 10.8

Distillery District, Toronto (*Source* Author)

An innovative partnership in the Distillery District is the resident Soulpepper Theatre and a collaboration with the Theatre School at George Brown College. A new facility to house these two organizations, the Young Centre for Performing Arts, was opened to the public in 2006. This 44,000 ft^2 performing arts, training and youth outreach centre allows students and professionals to work, learn and live side-by-side, sharing work studios, rehearsal halls, wardrobe and scenic facilities. The Centre features eight performance spaces suitable for audiences of 40–500. The project founders were aware of the shortage of theatre space in the city and, therefore encourage other performing arts organizations to book the facilities for their work. The Distillery District not only provides space for arts and creativity in the city, it is also now one of Toronto's top tourist destinations and an established visitor destination (Gertler et al. 2006). The district is also an important resource to the film industry. In the first 10 years over 1,000 films, television shows, and music videos have been filmed on location in the district.

Since re-opening, the complex has undergone substantial capital investment in upgrading and new facilities, but at the same time key anchor tenants (galleries, restaurants, retail) have vacated the site. Maintaining a diverse mix and affordability for a range of tenants has proved problematic. Meanwhile the neighbourhood has attracted new investment and dwellers with new apartment

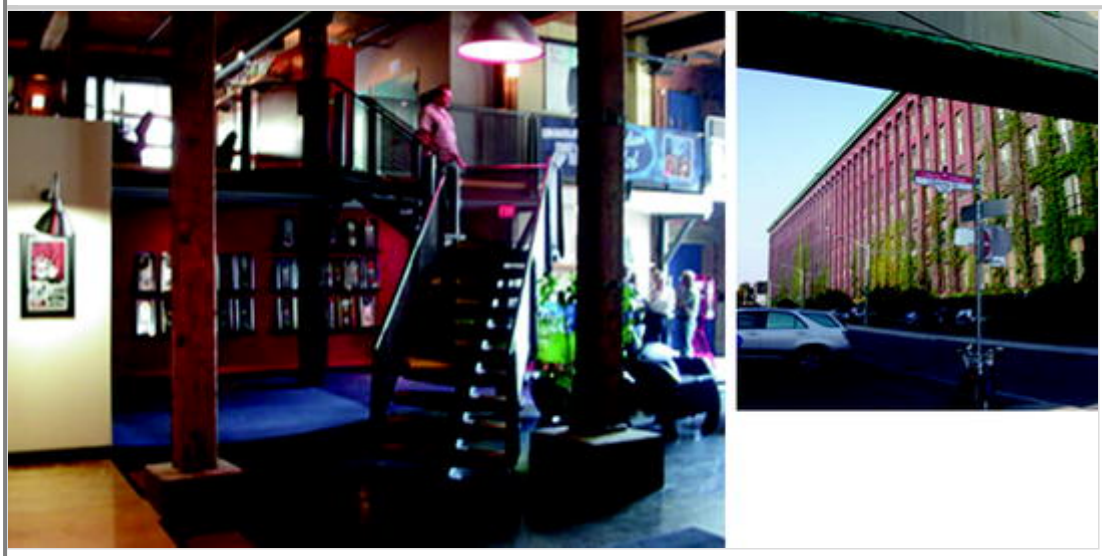
blocks and ‘condos’ under construction adjoining the heritage site. When completed, the local population will reach 2,500 which will be supplemented with further residential development in the surrounding neighbourhood. Whether this mixed neighbourhood can retain its quality and distinctive brand will remain to be seen—the next phase may see this heritage visitor district evolve to a more local destination. This also rests on its connectivity with other areas of the city, such as the undeveloped waterfront and connection to the downtown area of the city (Matthews 2010).

Liberty Village, Toronto

Liberty Village is a 38 ha, inner-city mixed use site of commercial, light industrial, and residential uses (Fig. 10.9). The area was traditionally a conglomeration of factories, prisons, and ammunitions storage that drove the industrial era, until 1858 it was the site of Toronto’s Industrial Exhibition. The developer’s and the City of Toronto had explicitly branded the area ‘Liberty Village’ and like the Distillery District, engaged the Artscape artists studio operator to create managed workspaces for arts and media firms. Today most of the Village’s century-old buildings have been retained and converted into commercial spaces that house a collection of creative enterprise in digital, fashion and home furnishing design, media, advertising, high technology, printing, food and drink industries. New apartments have been created in some of the large converted industrial buildings.

Fig. 10.9

Liberty Village—interior and exterior (*Source* Author)



Due to the strong presence of technology-intensive firms in the area, Liberty Village is almost completely wireless. For example, the Liberty Market building, one of the latest redevelopment projects in the neighbourhood, developed 300,000 ft^2 of commercial, retail, and studio space including a completely wireless network (a local tech company based in Liberty Village, struck a deal with the City of Toronto to wire the area). The Liberty Village Business Improvement Association (BIA) has played an integral role in protecting and promoting this creativity-rich employment area. Officially designated in 2001, it was Canada’s first non-traditional, non-retail BIA, with a campus style mixed use layout rather than the high street retail strip typical of most BIAs. The LVBIA is funded by a special tax levy collected from commercial properties in the area. Businesses in Liberty Village automatically become one of the 500 LVBIA members, representing the more than 7,000 people who work in the district. The LVBIA endeavours to

improve and enhance the design, safety and security features of the area. It also acts as a liaison with the community through newsletters and special events and expresses the community's voice on various issues.

Liberty Village's critical mass of creative entrepreneurs, wireless infrastructure, and reasonable rents has been a major selling feature of the area to businesses looking for modern, innovative workspaces. The village consists of over 100 properties zoned commercial or industrial and is designated an employment zone in the City of Toronto Official Plan. The City's employment zones do not allow for residential use, with the exception of artists live/work studios. Nevertheless, the Village's popularity over recent years has brought on the pressures of residential, condominium encroachment, particularly to the west and north of the village. The Liberty Village BIA has worked with the area's City Councillor and the City of Toronto's Urban Development Services to review the planning of the area in order to provide direction for future development and identify where residential development would be most appropriate. This review also considered public realm, heritage, land use, and transportation issues facing the area (Gertler et al. 2006). However as Wieditz observed: the area's makeover is supported by newspaper articles that promote the area as an "artsy loft district," a "bohemian enclave," and a "neighbourhood to live, work and play" for people who want to be close to the entertainment district and to the gentrifying Queen Street West area. With the influx of large-scale developers, it is likely that the new developments will obliterate any trace of the "artsy" and "bohemian" residents who once populated the area' (2007, p. 6). Maintaining mixed use and mixed economy therefore remains the prime challenge to these renewed urban quarters and in sustaining their distinctive brand.

Digital Shoreditch, London

The pattern of technology districts adopting the prefix 'Silicon' has accelerated over the last decade. On the one hand this is a case of place and 'hard branding' (Evans 2003) through the hope value associated with emulating Silicon Valley or 'Silicon Somewheres' (Florida 2005), on the other, a shorthand for what is primarily a 'soft-hardware' version of information and technology production originally represented by hi-tech manufacturing and related R&D. Clusters that have evolved more organically, to those envisioned through government investment and development areas can be seen at various scales, both regional and highly concentrated spatial geographies. Examples include Digital Corridors (Malaysia, S. Korea), Silicon 'triangles' (Alpine), the sub-regional Silicon Fen (Cambridge, UK) and Silicon Glen (Scotland), to local hubs where ICT and digital firms often co-locate with creative and other advanced producer and financial services. Examples of the latter include Silicon Sentier, Paris; Silicon Allee, Berlin; Silicon Alley, New York—and Silicon Roundabout or Digital Shoreditch, in East London.

This latter creative-digital district (Foord 2013) presents an interesting city branding case, located in a city fringe area historically non-descript, with a low income/deprived resident community, essentially a working area of the city untouched by the visitor economy or more conspicuous cultural consumption (Fig. 10.10). Its cultural workspace tradition dates back several centuries to crafts (jewellery, metalwork), fashion and textile sweatshops, printing and publishing, with an established artist community occupying cheaper studio spaces. This low cost cultural economy provided crucial elements in the area's transformation to one of the most vibrant creative and 'tech city' quarters in the world. This now contains a high concentration of new media and digital firms, alternative clubs and venues for music, art and independent retail outlets and a high concentration of "black collar" workers—an update of the black collar mine/oil worker, now representing the digital/designers and the fashion of wearing black. This profile and reputation has created a demand for hosting key design and digital events and festivals from the London Design Festival to the week-long Digital Shoreditch Festival which was first held in 2011 attracting 2,000 participants/visitors rising to 6,000 in 2012 and 15,000 in 2013. What is of particular significance

is that this network of over 1,000 creative-digital firms and growing annual festival is self-organised, with no public subsidy. In this sense, the quarter 'brand' is owned and has been created 'bottom-up', leaving local and city authorities in an enabling role and ensuring through planning and zoning that the character and socio-economic mix of uses is retained. This includes in this case, developing schemes for local residents and young people to access this growing digital employment sector.

Fig. 10.10

'Digital Shoreditch'—street art, accelerator incubator and newly-named 'Silicon Way' (*Source* Author)

As an indication that this production district is now a "destination", several boutique hotels have opened in recent years including the ACE hotel, the first outside of the USA, designed with materials produced locally—from specialist bricks, tiles to lighting, and with photographic references in bedrooms to the building's music hall past. The strategic importance attached to this sub-regional cluster and its role in the new digital industries was also recognised in 2010 when the UK government designated the wider area anchored in the city fringe by this creative industries quarter, as 'Tech City'—a swathe connecting this quarter further east to the Olympic Park, representing the physical the legacy from the London 2012 Summer Games. However, this top-down intervention in city branding through high tech economic development (see Fig. 10.1), runs counter to the organic and cultural evolution that has created the Shoreditch cluster and distinctive quarter of the city—primarily a small firm, creative entrepreneur and informal network phenomenon. The same risks and fears that undermine established cultural and heritage quarters (e.g. in Toronto above) are present here—gentrification effects though rapid rent and property valuation; the import of large firm and institutional organisations and venues; and a decline in the mixed use and diversity of the area. These are, of course, the key elements that created the attraction of these creative production quarters and that have contributed to their distinctive brand.

Schouwburgplein, Rotterdam

Schouwburgplein provides an example of a city centre square designated as an important focus for cultural activities for the whole city. Its stark urban design, designed to reflect the port has been controversial. However the square's "cool urban" image and central location has made it a popular meeting place for young people from a variety of different backgrounds. Schouwburgplein or "Theatre Square" is a large 12,250 m^2 square situated in the heart of Rotterdam, close to the central station and to major shopping streets and flanked by the City Theatre, the City Concert Hall, Rotterdam's largest film theatre complex, and a variety of cafes and restaurants (Evans et al. 2012). The square is located above an underground parking lot and is raised above street level as

a result with an unusual surface made using light durable decking. It consists of a central void with most activity taking place around the perimeter in the various cultural venues, cafes and restaurants. Custom made seating is provided along one side. The square's most prominent feature is the four iconic crane-like hydraulic lights that can be interactively altered by the inhabitants of the city (Fig. 10.11). These together with the hardscape surface are designed to be a reflection of the Port of Rotterdam.

Fig. 10.11

Schouwburgplein at night (*Source* Author)

Schouwburgplein has been designed to be used as an interactive public space, flexible enough to accommodate a variety of different uses during the day, evening and different seasons of the year. By raising the surface of the square above the surrounding area, a "city stage" was effectively created for festivals and installations. Regular cultural events, including music and dance are held in the square and attract diverse audiences from across the city and beyond. During the day the ramped roof entrance to the underground garage is used for skate boarding, other areas become an informal playground or football pitch, and the seating area provides a relatively tranquil area for shoppers and workers to take a break from work or the hustle and bustle of the surrounding shopping streets and offices.

The location of the square, close to the newly renovated Rotterdam Central station, the shops and the cinema means that it is an ideal spot for a rendezvous with friends and is used as such by people from all over the Netherlands and beyond. Surveys of the users found that the square particularly attracts young people, including those from a diverse ethnic backgrounds who come to skateboard, play football, meet friends, pose, or even flirt. Being some distance from their home neighbourhoods these young migrants are away from the prying eyes of family and fellow community members.

However, mixed views are held regarding the square. Some like it because it successfully captures the hard urban character of Rotterdam or because they feel that it is open and soothing—an oasis in the city centre. Others (generally older, indigenous white Dutch people) feel that it is barren space lacking in atmosphere, and the greenery and water features that are commonly found in other squares. Young people from immigrant communities see it as a friendly place where it is easy to meet people from different backgrounds. The design of the square has nonetheless successfully captured both the modern day urban image of Rotterdam and incorporated symbolic emblems of the docks—an important part of the city's cultural heritage and formerly a key a

source of employment for both indigenous Rotterdamers and early immigrants. It works in terms of providing a meeting area in the city centre for those from different backgrounds and reflects the multicultural identity that is Rotterdam today. It functions well as a multi-purpose space in the centre of the city offering sufficient space for a variety of activities. It provides a quiet place to sit and chat in the day time, and a focus for a range of multi-cultural events on summer evenings and weekends. The open nature of square allows for users to be easily seen and enables those with young children to keep sight of them whilst they play on the square.

The experience of Schauwburgplein illustrates the need for the effective management of public spaces to ensure their use is inclusive, but does not encourage anti-social behaviour. The square's location has been key to the way it is used and its role in encouraging intercultural mixing. The modern urban design has particularly resonated with young people who often feel excluded from branded consumption and heritage quarters of their own city.

Amsterdam Noord

An emerging creative quarter example is the area north of Amsterdam in a former working class district separated from the centre by the IJ 'river'. Literally the back door of the city, with access behind the main rail terminus, free ferries operate 24/7 with short 5–15 min journeys across the water. Here both new build and re-use of former industrial buildings is creating a creative zone combining workspaces for ICT and media firms, a unique multi-use arts and entertainment venue 'Tolhuistuin' (concert hall, theatre, galleries), whilst several floors of the former Shell building have been occupied for dance clubs and all night events (Fig. 10.12). The iconic Eye Film Institute/Cinema new building also opened there in 2012, relocated from its former museum quarter site. Along the waterfront, also connected by free ferry, is MTV's Benelux HQ, as well as artists' workspaces in newly-converted warehouses, including a 20,000 m^2 hangar hosting an 'arts city' of makeshift studios.

Fig. 10.12

Amsterdam Noord (*Source* Author) (l to r—part of eye building, former Royal Dutch Shell tower, A-Lab and Tolhuistin pavilion)

This regenerated quarter of the city is combining cultural activity with creative industry production and entertainment, and it will be interesting to see how these will coalesce into a zone for work and play over the new few years. What this combination of entrepreneurial, institutional and post-industrial place-making does demonstrate however, is that new quarters of a city can still emerge in areas otherwise overlooked, effectively extending the city whilst relieving pressure on

over-crowded and commodified cultural and tourist districts. The relocation of cultural flagships to more diverse areas can also present an interesting strategy for the cultural planning of the city, and present a radical alternative to the increasingly sterile museum and cultural quarters that have resulted in over-concentrated, mono-cultural areas of many cities. A sign of the competitive nature of these digital clusters however, is the relocation of Google's European headquarters from Amsterdam to London, attracted by the Tech City brand (above).

Conclusion

Whilst creative hubs associated with former cultural and heritage quarters indicate the importance of historical and symbolic association and building types, which can transform and recreate new creative districts, it can be seen that zones can also emerge from post-industrial areas of cities that otherwise lack brand potential. These former industrial city workshop areas such as in Clerkenwell London; SoHo New York and Distillery District Toronto, thus benefit from proximity to the city centre in 'city fringe' locations that effectively extend the city's visitor and cultural footprint. Planning and zoning rules are also needed in order to help protect the 'industrial' land and building use from higher value changes and the break-up of larger spaces for residential and commercial offices and retail development—as operates in cities such as Copenhagen and in Barcelona, as part of their creative city aspirations (Evans 2009b). For example, the designation of the Poblenou district of Barcelona's new university-media-hitech quarter "@22" as an industrial (as opposed to services/education/housing) zone reflects its transition from a textiles production district to a new creative industrial quarter. What is clear in these scenarios is that the new creative, media and digital industries require industrial planning and zoning protection no less than their industrial manufacturing forerunners, and that an industrial brand is no less effective than a heritage or primarily consumption based place.

As can be seen, this 'quarterisation' can in turn widen further, as new adjoining districts join the spread of regeneration and cultural redevelopment, as witnessed for example in Brooklyn, New York with the new quarters of Williamsburg, Red Hook and Dumbo—and in London's inexorable spread east towards the post-Olympics zone at Stratford. Connectivity is therefore important in creating and sustaining new branded quarters, as is a certain degree of distinction between these areas. This can be reflected in terms of legacy and historic association (e.g. place of origin branding); physically through the morphology and architectural quality and style; through ethnic or other cultural experiences, e.g. festivals, food; as well as in terms of particular cultural activities and business, e.g. speciality retail, street markets and trade fairs etc.

City branding through physical interventions and re-imaging the cityscape is evident in both incremental and radical forms, although this is generally less an act of deliberate branding, more a consequence of new-industrial development and globalisation. Larger and established cities use this strategy to enhance and extend their cultural offer, and to signal their continued growth and confidence in the future. Spatially this is also used to create images and welcoming spaces for under-developed zones and sites as part of place-making and festivalisation efforts (Palmer and Richards 2010). At the other extreme, new or resurgent cities look to major works and spectacular architecture to impose a new physical brand and city image, often a high risk strategy where little or no vernacular, pre-existing or cultural content is available. Both approaches tend to be 'top down' in their execution, despite so-called consultation processes (Evans 2005, 2006). The cultural and creative quarter on the other hand presents an alternative dimension to place-making—and therefore in extending city brand opportunities. This is due to their organic and largely unplanned development trajectory, but also as a result of a combination of a symbolic/historic production culture and vernacular spaces, and entrepreneurial spirit, led by individuals or often 'not for profit' agencies such as workspace providers and heritage organisations, and small firm networks. This includes Business Improvement Areas/Districts

based around cultural and creative industries and festivals, e.g. Chicago Loop and London's South Bank BIA/BIDs. This more 'bottom-up' revitalisation of city space has coincided with the growing pursuit of greater authenticity and the co-creation of everyday experiences by residents and to visitors to these new and rediscovered quarters of the city.

Cities are complex, messy and cultural forces that are lived and experienced from below, often collidinge with notions of a brand in the product or corporate sense. This is a good thing, since the enduring 'brand' is one shared but differentiated in the minds of communities of interest. Their view, literally and psychologically, of their city—whether they currently live or work there or not—makes up the collective identity of a city, which encompasses resistance and obduracy (Hommels 2005)—and also the adoption of changes to the city landscape. City branding as an aspiration should therefore form part of, and be subsidiary to, a cultural planning approach to the city, which is both sustainable (Evans 2013) and a product of cultural governance and comprehensive mapping of a city's cultural assets (Evans 2008). Urban design, and the support of cultural and creative quarters, would seem to have an important place in giving substance to place-making, and where appropriate, place-branding efforts. As Mommaas maintains: 'city branding not only meets the increased need to make one's own city stand out in the midst of an expanded and more mobile reality, but at the same time it also meets the need for sources of urban orientation and identification…lead(ing) to the creation of a need to refill a fragmented space with positive meanings that can function as new sources of civic pride' (2002, p. 44).
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